Alcohol Facts and Statistics

**Percentage of Drinkers:** In 2012, 87.6 percent of people aged 18 or older reported that they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime; 71 percent reported that they drank in the past year; 56.3 percent reported that they drank in the past month.¹

**Percentage of Binge Drinkers and Heavy Drinkers:** In 2012, 24.6 percent of people aged 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month (drinking 5 or more alcoholic drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days); 7.1 percent reported that they engaged in heavy drinking in the past month (drinking 5 or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days).²

**Alcohol Use Disorders (AUDs):** An estimated 17 million Americans have an AUD—a medical term that includes both alcoholism and harmful drinking that does not reach the level of dependence.³,⁴ (Please note: 17 million is an average of the 16 to 18 million cases reported in multiple sources.)

**Untreated AUDs:** Research shows that an estimated 15 percent of individuals with an AUD ever receive treatment.⁵,⁶ (Please note: This estimate is based on figures reported in multiple sources.)

**Deaths:** Each year in the United States, nearly 85,000 people die from alcohol-related causes, making it the third leading preventable cause of death in our country.⁷

**Economic Burden:** In 2006, alcohol problems cost the United States $224 billion each year, primarily from lost productivity but also from health care and property damage costs.⁸ These issues affect all Americans, whether they drink or not.

**Global Burden:** Globally, alcohol use is the fifth leading risk factor for premature death and disability; among people between the ages of 15 to 49, it is the first.⁹

**Family Consequences:** More than 10 percent of U.S. children live with a parent with an alcohol problem, according to a 2012 study.¹⁰

**Alcohol and College Students:** Researchers estimate that each year:

» 1,825 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.¹¹

» 696,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.¹¹
97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.\(^{11}\)

**Alcohol and Adolescents:**

- By age 15, more than 50 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink.\(^ {12}\)
- More adolescents drink alcohol than smoke cigarettes or use marijuana.\(^ {13}\)
- In 2012, about 9.3 million persons aged 12–20 reported drinking alcohol in the past month.\(^ {14}\)

**Alcohol and Pregnancy:**

- Among more than half a million pregnant women surveyed between 1991 and 2005, about 12 percent reported drinking and about 2 percent reported binge drinking.\(^ {15}\)
- The prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the United States is estimated to be between 2 to 7 cases per 1,000; the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in populations of younger school children may be as high as 2 to 5 percent in the United States and some Western European countries.\(^ {16}\)

**Alcohol and the Human Body:**

- In 2009, liver cirrhosis was the 12th leading cause of death in the United States, with a total of 31,522 deaths—664 more than in 2008.\(^ {17}\)
- Among all cirrhosis deaths in 2009, 48.2 percent were alcohol related. The proportion of alcohol-related cirrhosis was highest (70.6 percent) among those who died between the ages of 35 and 44.\(^ {17}\)
- In 2009, alcohol-related liver disease was the primary cause of nearly 1 in 3 liver transplants in the United States.\(^ {18}\)

Please note: Any statistics related to the prevalence of AUDs are based on definitions in the DSM–IV. These figures will be updated with new statistics based on DSM–5 criteria as soon as they become available.

For more information, please visit: [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

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Singal, A.K.; Guturu, P.; and Hmoud, B.; et al. Evolving frequency and outcomes of liver transplantation based on etiology of liver disease. Transplantation 95(5):755–760, 2012. PMID:23370710 (Please note: The “almost 1 in 3” figure aggregates the total number of transplants necessitated by alcoholic cirrhosis, alcoholic liver disease plus hepatitis C virus infection, and 40 percent of transplants necessitated by hepatocellular carcinoma.)