

Binge Drinking



Binge drinking, as defined by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, is the drinking pattern that elevates the blood alcohol concentration above 0.08 grams. Typically, binge drinking is thought of as consuming enough alcoholic beverages at one sitting in a short period of time often with the intention of becoming intoxicated. It is estimated that 1 in 6 adults binge drinks 4 times a month consuming up to 8 drinks per binge.

Binge drinking is associated with many harmful health concerns including, but not limited to; alcohol poisoning, brain damage, children born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), liver disease, and neurological damage. Drinking in excess can have a profound increase on the likelihood of harm to oneself or others through impaired driving, increased risk taking, sexually-transmitted infections and violence. Binge drinking is often used as a coping mechanism to relax, numb stressors, ease social anxiety and as a means of dealing with emotional and psychological pain.

The likelihood of developing an alcohol related illness increases significantly for those who binge drink frequently.

Quick facts:

- The prevalence of binge drinking is higher among men than women
- Binge drinking is more common than smoking among teenagers and young adults
- According to MADD, in 2000, 6.6 million people engaged in binge drinking and 2.1 million people are heavy drinkers
- People who binge drink are at risk for alcohol dependence and addiction
- At least 2/3 of alcohol dependent individuals entering treatment show evidence of anxiety, depression and/or mania.

Healthy Habits:

- According to Canadian guidelines, women should drink no more than 10 drinks a week with no more than 2 drinks on most days and a maximum of 15 drinks a week for men with no more than 3 drinks a day
- Supplement drinks with food and non-alcoholic beverages
- Know your limits; pace yourself and keep track of your drinks
- Familiarize yourself with a standard drink serving size
- Drink slowly; don't gulp or play drinking games
- Don't mix alcohol with medication or drugs
- Seek professional assistance in dealing with managing stress, anxiety, societal pressures and depressive mood
- Use a designated driver. Never use alcohol when driving, operating heavy machinery or when you are responsible for the health, wellbeing and safety of others.

Resources are available to assist you manage stressors, cope with anxiety, deal with binge drinking or substance dependence, and to guide you in supporting someone dealing with these issues.

Talk About It.

Visit Facing Facts for additional information and self-assessment resources.

www.virtualwellness.ualberta.ca

Contact Information:

Staff:

Human Resource Services
Phone: 780.492.7124
www.hrs.ualberta.ca

Employee and Family Assistance Program
Phone: 780.428.7587
www.hrs.ualberta.ca/efap

Postdoctoral Fellows:

Postdoctoral Fellows Assistance Program
Phone: 780.428.7587
www.hrs.ualberta.ca/pdap

Students:

Graduate Student Assistance Program
Phone: 780.428.7587
www.hrs.ualberta.ca/gsap

Counseling & Clinical Services
Phone: 780.492.5205
www.mentalhealth.ualberta.ca