

What Is Binge Drinking?

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent—or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter—or higher. For a typical adult, this pattern of excessive alcohol use corresponds to consuming 4 or more drinks (female), or 5 or more drinks (male) in about 2 hours. Research shows that fewer drinks in the same timeframe result in the same BAC in youth; only 3 drinks for girls, and 3 to 5 drinks for boys, depending on their age and size.¹

What is Binge Drinking?

A pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 g/dL (0.08 percent) or higher

TYPICALLY:



How Common Is Binge Drinking?

According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, about 67 million, or about 25 percent of people in the United States ages 12 and older reported binge drinking during the past month.² While binge drinking is a concern among all age groups, there are important trends in the following age groups:

- » **Preteens and teens:** Rates in binge drinking among young people have been steadily decreasing in the last decade. Still, according to 2019 data from the Monitoring the Future survey, 3.8 percent of 8th graders, 8.5 percent of 10th graders, and 14.4 percent of 12th graders reported binge drinking in the past 2 weeks.
- » **Young adults:** Among young adults, rates of binge drinking have been decreasing steadily in the past decade. However, rates among this group are still high; according to 2018 data from Monitoring the Future, 28 percent of college students and 25 percent of non-college, age-matched young adults reported binge drinking in the past 2 weeks.
- » **Older adults:** Binge drinking is on the rise among older adults—more than 10 percent of adults ages 65 and older reported binge drinking in the past month,³ and the prevalence is increasing.⁴ The increase in this group is of particular concern because many older adults use [medications that can interact with alcohol](#), have health conditions that can be exacerbated by alcohol, and may be more susceptible to alcohol-related falls and other accidental injuries.
- » **Women:** The number of women who binge drink has also increased. Studies show that among U.S. women who drink, about one in four has engaged in binge drinking in the last month,