



Mental Health Matters

A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | April 2024

Sober Topics: Navigating the Risks of Alcohol Misuse

As we focus on well-being, it's crucial to take a look at topics that impact our lives. In this edition of Mental Health Matters, we shed light on alcohol misuse, its risks, and provide insights into healthier ways to approach alcohol consumption.

Alcohol, when consumed responsibly, can be a part of social gatherings and celebrations.

However, it's essential to recognize the potential risks associated with alcohol misuse. Excessive drinking can lead to various health issues, strained relationships, and even legal troubles. Long-term misuse may contribute to liver damage, heart problems, and mental health disorders.

Alcohol addiction, or alcohol use disorder (AUD), is a significant public health concern in the United States. The prevalence of alcohol misuse has far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals, families, and communities across the nation.



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Prevalence:

Alcohol use is widespread in the United States, and while many individuals consume alcohol responsibly, a substantial number struggle with alcohol misuse. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), in 2020, approximately 14.5 million adults aged 18 and older were diagnosed with an alcohol use disorder.

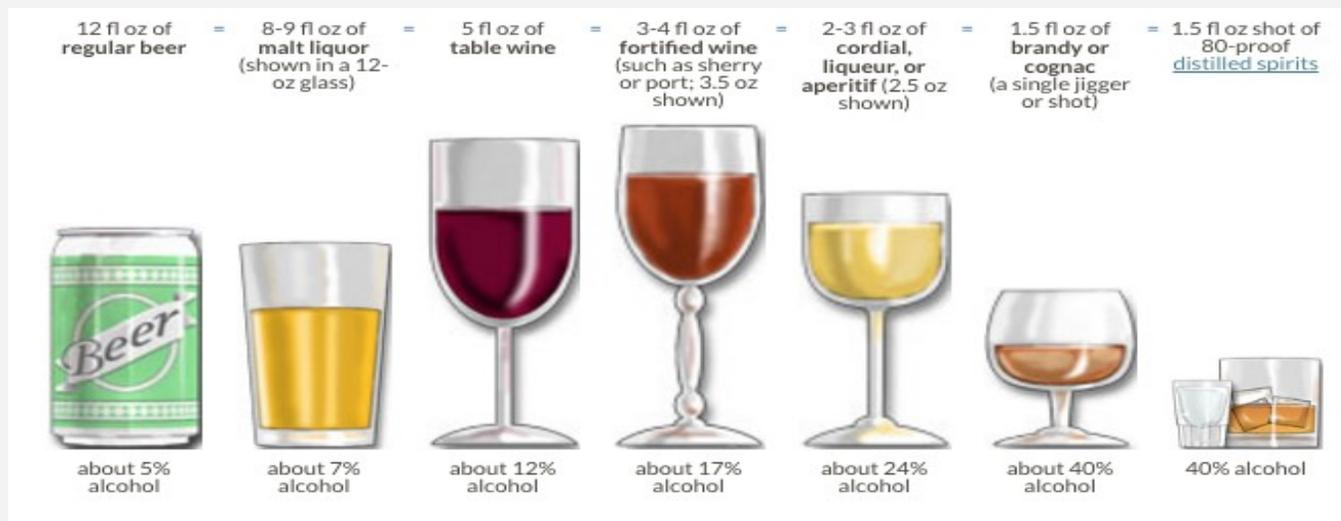
According To The Center for Disease Control (CDC)

[Drinking too much alcohol can harm your health. Learn the facts | CDC](#)

“Drinking too much can harm your health. Excessive alcohol use led to about 178,000 deaths and 4 million years of potential life lost (YPLL) each year in the United States from 2020 – 2021, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 23 years. Further, excessive drinking was responsible for 1 in 5 deaths among adults aged 20–49 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 were estimated at \$249 billion, or \$2.05 a drink.”

What is a Standard Drink?

In the United States, a standard drink contains 0.6 ounces (14.0 grams or 1.2 tablespoons) of pure alcohol. Generally, this amount of pure alcohol is found in:



What is Excessive Drinking?

Excessive drinking includes binge drinking, heavy drinking, and any drinking by pregnant women or people younger than age 21.

Binge drinking, the most common form of excessive drinking, is defined as consuming:

- For women, 4 or more drinks during a single occasion.
- For men, 5 or more drinks during a single occasion.
- Heavy drinking is defined as consuming:
 - For women, 8 or more drinks per week.
 - For men, 15 or more drinks per week.

Recognizing the Signs of Alcohol Misuse:

- Unsuccessful attempts to limit alcohol consumption.
- Spending more time to drink or recover from alcohol consumption.
- Loss of control on the amount of alcohol consumed.
- Inefficient at work and school.
- Memory loss.
- Unable to discontinue alcohol use despite of physical, social or interpersonal problems.
- Giving up social life, activities, and hobbies.
- Preoccupation with thoughts of obtaining and consuming alcohol.

[nine signs of AUD - Search \(bing.com\)](#)

Promoting Healthier Habits:

What is Moderate Drinking?

Encourage moderation by setting personal limits on alcohol intake.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends that adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to **2 drinks or less in a day for men or 1 drink or less in a day for women**, on days when alcohol is consumed. The *Guidelines* also do not recommend that individuals who do not drink alcohol start drinking for any reason and that if adults of legal drinking age choose to drink alcoholic beverages, drinking less is better for health than drinking more.

Alternate with Water: Hydration is essential. When consuming alcohol, alternate each drink with a glass of water.

Mindful Drinking: Practice mindful drinking by savoring each sip. Be aware of the taste and the experience.

Know Your Limits: One size does NOT fit all. Recognizing when you've had enough is vital.

Plan for Transportation: If you plan to consume alcohol outside your home, always plan for a safe way to return. Designate a driver, use public transportation, or consider rideshare services to ensure everyone's safety.

There are some people who should not drink any alcohol, including those who are:

- Younger than age 21.
- Pregnant or may be pregnant.
- Driving, planning to drive, or participating in other activities requiring alertness.
- Taking certain prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- Suffering from certain medical conditions.
- Recovering from alcoholism or are unable to control the amount they drink.



[RETHINKING DRINKING: ALCOHOL AND YOUR HEALTH](#)
([nih.gov](#))

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Ideas to Observe National Alcohol Awareness Month

Participate in the Alcohol-Free-Weekend - Spend 72 hours without alcohol. Make sure you and your family participate in this activity and monitor symptoms of discomfort or cravings within the three days.

Start conversations - It is your role as a responsible adult to initiate the conversations that nobody is willing to talk about. Speak with your friends and families who you've noticed are reliant on heavy drinking. As a parent, teach your children about alcohol misuse and help them build coping skills. Tell them that stress, anger, loneliness, and peer pressure are a part of life and should not cause them to give in to liquor for relaxation.

Throw 'clean' parties - Use the month of April to throw alcohol-free, clean, and healthy parties for adults. Invite over friends, neighbors, and family to enjoy social gatherings without any trace of liquor. Serve kombucha, mocktails, club soda, and booze-free beer to set an example. Consider doing this thrice a month for healthy practice.

[NATIONAL ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH -April 2023 - National Today](#)



Join us to discuss the signs of alcohol addiction (referred to as "Alcohol Use Disorder" by mental health professionals). Learn how to approach loved ones who may be struggling and available treatment options. Understanding these options can make the difference between a successful recovery and continued relapse.

Thursday, April 11, 6:00pm

Zoom Virtual Webinar

Pre-registration is required: <https://ucnj.org/aam/>



**Atlantic Behavioral Health Webinar:
"Overcoming Addiction in 2024"**

Presented by James Sherer, MD, Medical Director,
Addiction Psychiatry, Overlook Medical Center



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CRISIS RESOURCES

If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **988**

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA + Youth : **1-866-488-7386**

Veterans Crisis Line: **Dial 988 and Press 1**

Dial 211: 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE**

National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE**

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
24/7 Hotline **1-800-656-4673**

ADDICTION RESOURCES

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator.](#) Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

Narcotics Anonymous - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

NJ Self Help Clearinghouse 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

CONCERN

Your Employee Assistance Program:

973-451-0025

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Services

24/7 Hotlines:

Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078

Hackettstown Medical Center: 908-454-5141

Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100

Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586

Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973

Email: CONCERN-EAP@atlanticealth.org

