



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM ATLANTIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | April 2023

Alcohol Awareness Month

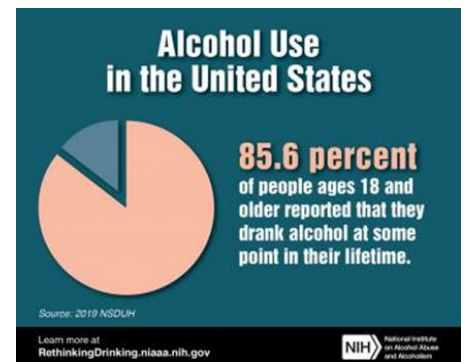
Have you ever looked forward to having a drink after work, at a social gathering, or to just unwind? If so, you are one of over 86% of the American population who enjoys alcohol now and then.

It is common in our culture to enjoy a social drink. For many people, this is never a problem. But for many others, drinking can get out of hand and cause problems in their life, with school, at work, and in relationships. Alcohol misuse and abuse can even be deadly.

Rethinking drinking is a good idea for all of us. Even if it never causes you a problem, it is good to be informed and aware of the potential risks for yourself and your loved ones.

National Alcohol Awareness Month was started by Marty Mann, the first woman to complete the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step recovery program back in 1987. The mission was to raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol abuse. That goal continues to this day.

- About 400,000 adolescents in the U.S. have an alcohol use disorder
- Over 10,000 deaths occur each year due to alcohol
- 140,000 people die from excessive alcohol use



Why Is National Alcohol Awareness Month Important?

Denial in alcoholism is a real disease – Anybody suffering from substance abuse or struggling with alcoholism would deny it. They underestimate their ability to control the craving or to quit, the amount of alcohol they drink, and the impact it has had on their life. Denial is a common trait or symptom of alcoholism that has to be counseled.

There's a stigma surrounding alcoholism – What comes to your mind when you think about alcoholism? A drunk man living in rags on the streets, drinking hard liquor on the job, and appearing at the bar every night? The movies' depiction of alcoholism is only a quarter of the truth, and this is why millions of people have trouble recognizing the problem or seeking help.

Alcoholism claims thousands of lives annually – Alcoholism is the third-leading preventable cause of death in the United States, claiming the lives of more than 90,000 people every year.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL?

With Alcohol, Size Matters — Know What You Are Drinking

US Standard Drink Sizes



12 ounces
5% ABV beer



8 ounces
7% ABV malt liquor



5 ounces
12% ABV wine



1.5 ounces
40% (80 proof)
ABV distilled spirits
(gin, rum, vodka,
whiskey, etc.)

ABV = Alcohol by Volume

A standard drink is equal to 14.0 grams (0.6 ounces) of pure alcohol. Generally, this amount of pure alcohol is found in 12 ounces of beer (5% alcohol content).

Binge drinking is defined as four or more drinks for women, and five or more drinks for men during a single occasion, generally within about two hours.

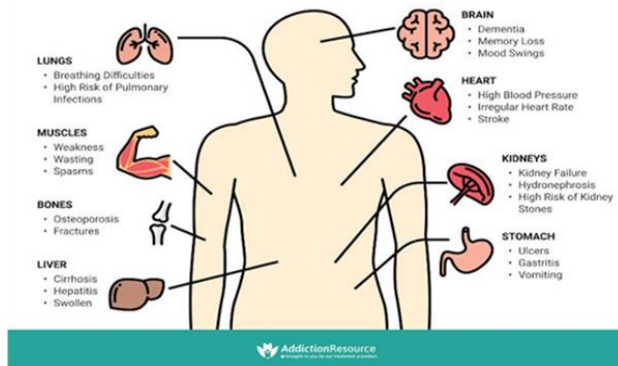
Moderate drinking is defined as one drink or less/day for women and two drinks or less/day for men.

Heavy drinking is defined as eight or more drinks/week for women and 15 or more drinks/week for men.

[Alcohol Questions and Answers | CDC](#)

Consequences of Alcohol Misuse

Physical Effects of Alcoholism



- Many illnesses are connected to alcohol misuse and addiction, including liver disease, pancreatitis, and various cancers to name a few.
- Unintended accidents and injuries often occur while under the influence of alcohol.
- Relationship conflicts often escalate because of alcohol misuse and can result in violence.
- Harm to a fetus can also occur during pregnancy.

How Do I Know if I Have a Problem?

One of the challenges of problem drinking can be denial. People often don't realize there is a problem until it gets out of hand. If you begin to see:

- Your relationships are more conflictual.
- You're not doing as well in school or at work, it might be time to talk to your medical provider.
- You are having more accidents.

It is time to take a deeper look into your drinking patterns and habits.

*If you are concerned about your drinking or a loved one's drinking, consider calling **1-800-662-HELP***

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](#)

Benefits of Not Drinking Alcohol

1. Better looking skin: Abstinence from alcohol restores elasticity.
2. Improved sleep: Alcohol affects the sleep-wake cycle and makes it harder to fall and/or stay asleep.
3. Healthier weight: Alcohol derails metabolism and is filled with sugars and empty calories.
4. Better mental health: Abstaining from alcohol can allow more focal treatment for a co-occurring mental health disorder.
5. Improved immunity: Alcohol impedes white blood cell production, making it harder fight viruses and bacteria.
6. Enhanced nutrition: Alcohol interferes with digestion, storage, utilization, and excretion of nutrients, and many heavy drinkers are malnourished.
7. Lower risk of cancer: Alcohol is a known carcinogen and increases risk of multiple types of cancer.



According to The Recovery Research Institute, 9.1% or 22.35 million Americans have resolved an alcohol or other drug problem, 51% of whom used alcohol as their primary substance.

Talk to your doctor if you think you have a problem with alcohol or mental health or use the resources below to get connected to help today!

If you or someone you know is in a crisis, get help immediately. You can call 911 or call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at **988**.

211 – Provides local 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 \(njgroups.org\)](#)

Atlantic Behavioral Health ACCESS Center:
888-247-1400

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

Website:
Atlantichealth.org

 **Atlantic Health System**
Behavioral Health



Email:
nomorewhispers@atlanticealth.org