

# Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Alcohol is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. About 95,000 Americans die from alcohol-related causes each year.


Many Americans drink alcohol occasionally when socializing with family and friends. For many, moderate drinking is probably safe. Moderate drinking is defined, by the CDC, as one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men. But because drinking too much can be harmful, it's important to know how alcohol may affect your life, your loved ones, and your community; and how much is too much. It's also important to know that moderate drinking levels are not safe for everyone. If you have questions, talk to your doctor to find out what a safe amount of alcohol intake is for you.

**Learn more** with these activities:

- Activity 1: Fact sheet
- Activity 2: Self-assessment + resources
- Activity 3: Mocktail recipes



**14.5 million people ages 12 and older had Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in 2019. Less than 10% of people with last-year AUD receive any treatment. ([source](#))**

 **Questions?** Email [Wellness@Medica.com](mailto:Wellness@Medica.com)

***\*Programs are open to all, regardless of insurance unless otherwise noted.***

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# Health disparities

“Health disparities” are preventable differences in health among different social or racial groups. Health disparities are a complex and challenging problem across the world. Social factors play the largest role in shaping the overall health of communities. For example, the ability to access healthcare, a safe living environment, racial equity, nutritious food, quality education, and supportive relationships free of discrimination are all incredibly important to your overall health.

Alcohol and alcohol use doesn't always affect all groups of people equally. There are differences in risk among different groups of people due to differences in genetics, hormones, environmental exposure, and other factors. In addition, lack of access to health care, socioeconomic status, and cultural attitudes/behaviors can be barriers to treatment for alcohol misuse.

## Did you know?

- Alcohol use disorders are less common among African Americans (4.5%) than the total population (5.4%). (Source: [American Addiction Centers](#))
- Binge drinking among African Americans (23%) is slightly less common than in Hispanics (24.6%) and Caucasians (25.7%). (Source: [American Addiction Centers](#))
- The rate of heavy drinking among African Americans (4.3%) is much less than the general population (6.1%) and Caucasians (7.2%). (Source: [American Addiction Centers](#))
- Hispanics are less likely to perceive a need for treatment and seek treatment services compared to the general population. (Source: [Alcohol.org](#))
- American Indians and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely than other racial demographics to need treatment for a drug and/or alcohol addiction problem. This population is also more likely to seek help and admit they would benefit from treatment. (Source: [Alcohol.org](#))
- Asian Americans tend to abuse substances and struggle with alcohol and drug-related issues at very low rates and are more likely to turn to their cultural norms before seeking professional help for substance abuse. (Source: [Alcohol.org](#))

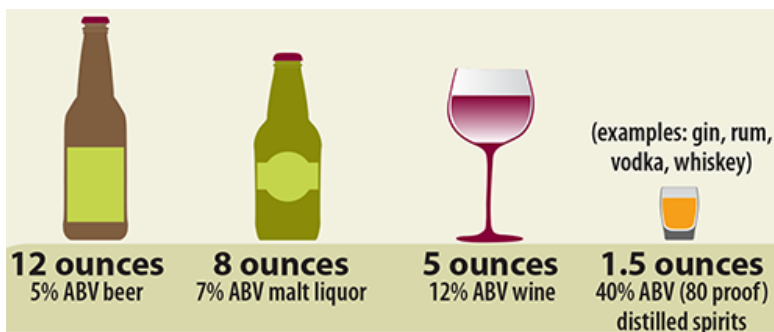
For more information, please visit:

- [FindHelp.org](#)
- [AlcoholAwareness.org](#)
- [Women for Sobriety](#)
- [Alcohol.org](#)

# Activity 1: Alcohol use fact sheet

Do you know the definition of a standard drink? Did you know that one glass doesn't always equal one drink? Read on for some startling statistics and facts about alcohol use.

- 85.6% of people ages 18 and older reported they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime.
- Every day in America, 32 people die from drunk driving crashes—that's one person every 45 minutes.
- Excessive alcohol use costs the American economy \$249 billion.
- By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 61.5% of teenagers have abused alcohol.
- 25.6% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have abused alcohol at least once.
- 60% of people increased their alcohol consumption during COVID-19 lockdowns.
  - Reasons for increased drinking include increased stress (45.7%), increased alcohol availability (34.4%) and boredom (30.1%).
- The difference between normal use and addiction is someone who's not addicted won't have cravings or be obsessed about how to get the next drink or feel the need to use alcohol just to get through the day. With addiction, using alcohol continues despite there being negative consequences in their life from that ongoing use, and there's a reliance on alcohol to feel ok or "normal."
- Per the CDC, a standard drink is any drink that contains 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. The percentage, expressed as alcohol by volume (ABV), varies within and across beverage types. Some examples of **one standard drink** include:



Source: [CDC](#)

- One glass, bottle, or container isn't always the same as one drink. Drinks are often made, sold, and served in containers that are more than one standard drink. For example, craft beers come in 16oz or 20oz containers and may have very high alcohol content. Craft cocktails often contain more than one spirit and/or liqueur. In both examples, one glass is one and a half, two or even three standard drinks.
- Excessive alcohol use can have immediate and long-term health consequences. The immediate consequences are most often the result of binge drinking. Binge drinking is commonly defined as consuming four or more drinks during a single occasion for women and five or more drinks during a single occasion for men.
  - Short-term health risks include injuries (motor vehicle crashes, burns, falls), violence (homicide, suicide, sexual assault), alcohol poisoning, and risky sexual behaviors (unprotected sex, sex with multiple partners).
  - Long-term health risks include chronic diseases and life-threatening problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, liver failure, dementia, depression, anxiety, and increased risk of certain types of cancer (e.g., head and neck, esophageal, liver, breast and colorectal).

Statistic Sources: [Partners in Prevention](#); [CDC: Impaired driving](#); [CDC: Alcohol basics](#); [National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics](#)

## Activity 2: Self-assessment and resources

Are your drinking habits safe, risky or harmful? Take the self-assessment for you or share it with someone you care about.

[Take the self-assessment](#)

### Resources

If you think you or someone you know may have a drinking problem, you're not alone. Review the resources and support that are available. **Note:** Resources are open to all, regardless of insurance unless noted\*.

- Contact your primary care provider.
- Ask if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program. (You do not have to disclose why, and what you share with your EAP is confidential).
- [Behavioral health and substance use case management.\\*](#)
- Find an [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) meeting (AA) near you.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP
- Set a personal/professional [R.E.A.L. Goal](#) to help you reduce your alcohol consumption.
- Try a [mocktail recipe](#) from a special edition of Made From Scratch
- Reach out to a close family member or friend for support.

### How to talk to someone about their drinking:

If you are not sure how to start a conversation or what to say to someone you care about who you might think has a drinking problem, read on for some suggestions.

Firstly, drinking problems are not measured by the amount someone drinks or how often, but what matters most is how drinking affects the person's life. For example, your loved one may have a drinking problem if they cannot cut back on drinking; are having trouble at work, home, school, or relationships; or are missing work, school or social activities because of alcohol use.

Secondly, talking about alcohol takes courage. If you are concerned, don't wait to bring it up, as the problem will likely get worse, not better. Approach the person with a sense of curiosity. The use of questions increases the chance of a discussion, making the person feel less like they are being accused or attacked. Also, think about who you are talking to; what kind of context or situation would be best to try and start this conversation?

Some possible questions to ask:

- I've been wondering if you think I/you/we...
  - have been drinking more lately?
  - are drinking too much?
  - are having any problems because of drinking?
  - should take a break from drinking?
- What do you think would happen if I/you/we took a break from drinking?
- Have you ever thought I/you/we drink too much?
- Do you know anybody you think drinks too much; if so, why do you believe that?
- What do you think people get out of drinking, or why do some individuals drink more than others?

For additional information on talking to someone about their drinking, refer to [helping a loved one with a drinking problem.](#)

## Activity 3: Mocktail recipes

### Made From Scratch Mocktails

There are many reasons to be alcohol-free, and a lot of health benefits, too! These mocktail recipes can help relieve the social pressure of drinking and allow anyone who chooses not to drink alcohol to feel comfortable and have the same experience.

#### Orange Moscow mule mocktail

##### Ingredients

- 1 Cara Cara orange, juice
- 1 cup ice
- 6.8 oz light ginger beer
- Fresh mint leaves (for garnish)

##### Directions

1. Slice the orange in quarters, then cut two to three slices for garnish and set aside. Juice the rest of the orange and place it in a copper mug (or any glass). Fill the glass with ice to the top. Add the ginger beer and garnish with orange slices and mint leaves.

**Tips for buying and storing oranges:** Choose citrus fruit that smells fresh and feels heavy for its size. That's a sure sign it's going to be juicy! Keep your citrus fresh longer (up to three weeks) by storing it in the refrigerator at a temperature below 42°. Leftover or cut oranges should be refrigerated within two hours.



**Servings:** 1 | **Nutrition facts per serving:** Calories 104; Total fat 0g; Saturated fat 0g; Carbohydrates 27g; Fiber 3g; Protein 1g; Sugar 20.5g

#### Non-alcoholic sangria

##### Ingredients

- Fresh lemon slices
- Fresh lime slices
- Fresh orange slices
- Cranberries
- 2 cups cranberry juice
- 2 cups grape juice
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 4 cups sparkling mineral water or lemon-lime soda

##### Directions

1. In a large pitcher, add the lemon slices, lime slices, orange slices, and cranberries. Add cranberry juice, grape juice, orange juice, and lemon juice. Stir well.
2. Refrigerate until ready to use.
3. Just before serving, add sparkling mineral water or lemon-lime soda. Mix well.



**Recipe note:** The lemon-lime soda will make this a sweeter drink, whereas the sparkling mineral water will be less sweet.

**Servings:** 6-8 | **Nutrition facts per serving:** Calories 311; Total fat 0g; Saturated fat 0g; Sodium 53mg; Fiber 0g; Protein 1g; Sugar 69g

## Watermelon 'nojitos'

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 1 medium watermelon, peeled and chopped
- 2 limes, sliced
- 2 cups chilled soda water
- 1/3 cup lime juice
- 1 small bunch fresh mint, sprigs picked
- 1 Tbsp caster sugar (extra)
- 2 tsp finely grate lime zest
- Ice cubes (for serving)

### Directions

1. Place sugar and 1 cup water in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, for five minutes or until sugar dissolves. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Boil, without stirring, for five minutes. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
2. Place watermelon in a blender and blend until smooth.
3. Place lime slices in a large jug and slightly crush the lime to release juice. Add watermelon, soda water, lime juice, and cooled sugar syrup. Stir to combine. Add mint.
4. Combine extra sugar and lime rind on a small plate. Place 1/4 cup water in a separate bowl. Dip the rim of the serving glasses into water, then in the sugar mixture. Divide ice among glasses. Add watermelon mixture. Serve immediately.



**Servings:** 8 | **Nutrition facts per serving:** Calories 207; Total fat 0.3g; Saturated fat 0g; Sodium 12mg; Carbohydrates 26g; Fiber 1.5g; Protein 1g

## Virgin bloody Mary

### Ingredients

- 2 cups low-sodium tomato juice
- 1/4 cup dill pickle juice OR olive brine
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice, fresh
- 1 Tbsp horseradish
- 1 tsp hot sauce
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp celery seeds
- 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
- 4 small celery stalks with leaves (for serving)
- 4 lemon wedges (for garnish)
- 12 large olives (optional)

### Directions

1. Combine tomato juice, pickle juice, lemon juice, horseradish, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, celery seeds, and cayenne in a large pitcher.
2. To serve, pour about 2/3 cup into four ice-filled glasses. Garnish each with a celery stalk, olives, and a lemon wedge.

**Recipe note:** This mocktail is highly nutritious! Tomato juice contains a wide variety of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, and it's rich in lycopene—a powerful antioxidant with many health benefits. When choosing tomato juice, make sure to read the labels. Some tomato juice can be high in sodium and may contain added sugars. Look for tomato juice that is low in sodium with no added fruit or sugar.



**Servings:** 4 | **Nutrition facts per serving:** Calories 33; Total fat 0.5g; Sodium 295mg; Carbohydrates 7g; Fiber 1.5g; Protein 1g; Sugar 4.5g