

APRIL PREVENTIVE HEALTH TOOLKIT

Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Excessive alcohol consumption is one of the leading preventable causes of death in the United States. More than 178,000 Americans die from alcohol-related causes each year.

Many Americans drink alcohol occasionally when socializing with family and friends. However, recent studies suggest that even moderate drinking may have health risks. Moderate drinking is defined, by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men. Because drinking, even moderately, can be harmful, it's important to know how alcohol may affect your life, your loved ones, and your community. If you have questions, talk to your doctor to learn more about the effects of alcohol.

Learn more with the activities in this toolkit:

- **Self-assessment**
- **Fact sheet**
- **Mocktail recipes**
- **Talking about alcohol use**
- **Resources**

According to the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 28.9 million people ages 12 and older had Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the past year.

(Source: [NIH](#))



Questions?

Email us at Wellness@Medica.com



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Health disparities

Health disparities are preventable differences in health between groups of people due to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, education, economic status, where they live, disability, etc. Health disparities are a complicated and challenging problem around the world. The health of a community is shaped mostly by social factors. For example, having access to healthcare, a safe area to live, racial equity, healthy food, good education, and supportive relationships free of discrimination are all very important to overall health.

People who face health disparities often have a higher risk for alcohol use disorder. In the U.S., certain groups experience higher rates and risk for alcohol abuse due to social and economic factors. Studies show that individuals facing economic hardship or living in areas with limited access to healthcare and support services are more vulnerable to substance misuse.

Did you know?

- Alcohol is the primary substance for 65% of veterans entering treatment centers – nearly twice the rate of civilians. (Source: [American Addiction Centers](#))
- The historic gap in alcohol consumption between males and females is narrowing. Among adolescents and emerging adults, females are now more likely to report drinking and getting drunk in the past month than their male peers for the first time since researchers began measuring such behaviors. (Source: [NIH](#))
- 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](#))
- American-born Asian Americans are much more prone to addiction and issues with alcohol and drug abuse than those who are foreign born. (Source: [American Addiction Centers](#))

For more information, please visit:

- [American Addiction Centers](#)
- [NIH: Alcohol's Effects on Health](#)
- [Alcohol Awareness.org](#)

Self-assessment

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](#)

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.

- Every day in America, 37 people die from drunk driving crashes—that's one person every 39 minutes.
- Alcohol is by far the most commonly abused substance among teens and young adults.
 - In 2023, 3.3 million youth ages 12 to 20 reported binge drinking at least once in the past month.
 - By 8th grade, 24% of students had used alcohol and by the end of high school 59% of students had done so.
 - Adults ages 26 and older who began drinking before age 15 are 3.6 times more likely to report having AUD in the past year than those who waited until age 21 or later to begin drinking.
- 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 addiction, 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). Those addicted to alcohol often rely on it to feel "normal", despite the potential for negative consequences of continued use.
- Per the CDC, a standard drink is any drink that has 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. The percentage, expressed as alcohol by volume (ABV), varies within and across beverage types. 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 have more than one spirit and/or liqueur. Some examples of **one standard drink** include:



(Sources: [CDC](#), [NHTSA](#), [NIH](#), [NIAAA](#), [NIAAA](#))

Mocktail recipes

There are many reasons why someone may choose to be alcohol-free. These mocktail recipes can help relieve some of the social pressures associated with drinking. They allow anyone who chooses not to drink alcohol to feel comfortable and included.

Orange Moscow mule mocktail

Ingredients

- 1 Cara Cara orange, juiced
- 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.
2. 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, while 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 has 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 have 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



Talking about alcohol use

If you think someone you care about might have a drinking problem, but aren't sure how to bring it up, keep reading for some helpful suggestions.

First, it's important to know that a drinking problem isn't only about how much or how often someone drinks – it's about how alcohol affects their life. For example, they might have trouble cutting back, face problems at work or school, struggle with relationships, or skip important activities because of drinking.

Talking about this can be hard, but it's important to act sooner rather than later because the problem might get worse over time. Try to approach the conversation with kindness and ask open-ended questions to start a discussion. This can help the person feel less judged and help them to open up.

Consider the person you're talking to. Choose a time and setting where they feel safe and comfortable to talk openly.

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 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](#).

Resources

[Case management for behavioral health and substance use \(Medica\)](#)

[Find a meeting \(AA\)](#)

[FindHelp.org](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

[Women for Sobriety](#)

[About moderate alcohol use \(CDC\)](#)