



A Standard Drink



April 2019

Did You Know?

Alcohol Awareness Month: Today, the majority of scrutiny directed toward the potential dangers of drug use focuses primarily on illegal drugs. Oftentimes, we forget that legality isn't synonymous with safety. April, Alcohol Awareness Month, provides an opportunity to combat the stigma associated with alcohol use disorders and support those in or seeking treatment for the disease.

What You Should Know:

- Alcohol affects every organ it contacts in the human body and acts as a central nervous system depressant. This means it slows down all body functions as it is absorbed from the stomach and small intestines into the blood stream.
- Alcohol makes it difficult for the brain to function properly. It interferes with many of the brain's pathways including communication, coordination, vision, judgment, memory, mood and behavior.
- According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), excessive alcohol use results in over 88,000 deaths per year in the U.S. Of those, 4,300 deaths consist of underage youth who suffered from excessive consumption.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines excessive drinking to include: "binge drinking, heavy drinking, and any drinking by pregnant women or people younger than age 21."
- For women, excessive drinking involves consuming 4 or more drinks during a single occasion, and 8 or more drinks per week. For men, it involves consuming 5 or more drinks at one time, or at minimum 15 drinks per week.
- There is a large underage market for alcohol. The CDC reports that 11% of all alcohol consumption in the U.S. is comprised of teens 12 to 20 years old. Excessive drinking can also lead to health complications involving the liver and pancreas. Steatosis, fibrosis, cirrhosis, and pancreatitis are among a variety of potential health dangers.
- Alcohol use disorders can result in long-term health effects on a user's heart. This includes cardiomyopathy (stretching and drooping of heart muscle), arrhythmias, stroke, and high blood pressure.
- There is **no** safe amount of alcohol consumption while pregnant. Exposing a developing fetus to any amount of alcohol could lead to life-long health conditions, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and Sudden infant death Syndrome (SIDS).

What You Can Do:

- **Get Help:** If you or someone you know may be suffering from a use disorder, seek help. The CDC urges those in need to consult a personal healthcare provider or contact the National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service, available at 1-800-662-HELP.
- **Limit Use:** Alcohol affects people differently. Various effects can be influenced by factors such as age, sex, physical health, ethnicity, past history, timeframe, food consumption while drinking, and use of other drugs or medication while consuming alcohol. Find a healthy limit for your body and be sure to stay within it. Also, documenting drinking patterns can give insight to potential risks, including a use disorder.



Information obtained from: www.cdc.gov; www.drugabuse.gov; www.niaaa.nih.gov; www.ncadd.org

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The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Inc., publishes Did You Know, a regular update about alcohol & other drugs - - America's #1 public health problem. ECCPASA • 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716-831-2298 • www.eccpasa.org