



Excessive Use of Alcohol

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, approximately 18 million American adults abuse alcohol or become alcohol dependent¹, while 80,000 deaths per year occur in the U.S. due to excessive alcohol use.² Excessive alcohol use includes one or more of the following³:

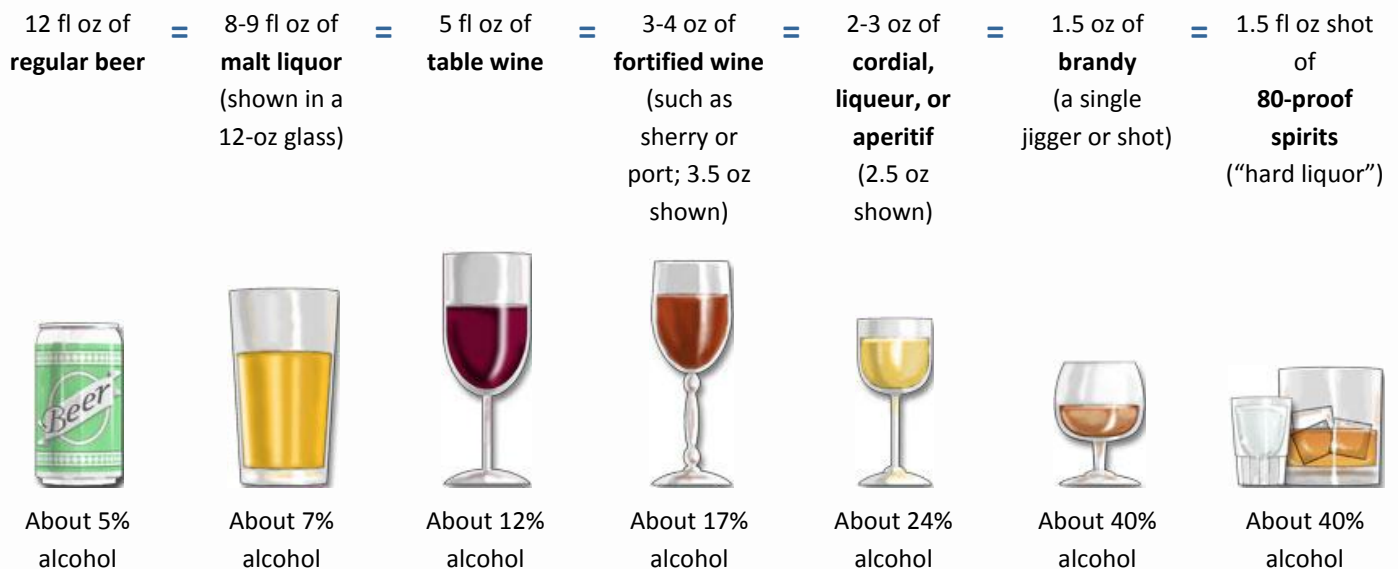
- Heavy drinking, typically defined as two or more drinks (see below for what counts as a drink) per day for men on average and one or more drinks per day on average for women,
- Binge drinking, typically defined as five or more drinks on a single occasion for men, and four or more drinks on a single occasion for women
- Underage drinking
- Drinking while pregnant

The earlier in life an individual begins to consume alcohol, the more likely they will develop alcohol related problems later in life.⁴ Education and awareness can help change attitudes and behaviors about excessive alcohol use.



<http://www.thatguy.com/>

What Counts as a Drink?



Graphic and information obtained from 'Rethinking Drinking', The National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

A drink you order at a restaurant or bar may actually be larger than one standard drink. This drink could be equivalent to 2 or 3 standard drinks depending on the size of the drink and the amount of alcohol in it. When a drink is counted, it is not just the amount of total liquid in the glass, but rather the amount of 'pure' alcohol contained within the drink. The chart above illustrates what counts as a standard drink in each beverage category. A 24 fl. oz. beer, for example, would count as 2 standard drinks; whereas a mixed drink with 4.5 fl. oz. of liquor would be equivalent to 3 standard drinks. It is very important to take this information into consideration when you evaluate how much you are drinking, so you are not estimating an inaccurate amount of what you are consuming.



Health Effects of Excessive Alcohol Use ⁵

The excessive use of alcohol can have immediate health effects such as unintentional injuries, violence, risky sexual behaviors, alcohol poisoning, and miscarriage/stillbirth. Long-term excessive alcohol use can cause numerous health effects including liver disease, cancer, heart problems, psychiatric problems and social problems.

Who Should Not Consume Alcohol? ⁶

- People driving or engaging in activities that require skills, coordination, and alertness
- People taking medications legally or illegally (prescription or over-the-counter) that may cause harmful reactions when mixed with alcohol
- Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
- Individuals on duty or at work
- Anyone under the legal drinking age of 21
- Recovering alcoholics or those who have trouble controlling their alcohol use
- People with certain medical or mental health conditions that can worsen with alcohol use



To learn how our programs can help keep you fit for service and improve your overall health, visit us at:
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/default.aspx>

Additional Resources

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): <http://www.aa.org>
- The Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD): http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/21st_Century_Sailor/CSADD/Pages/default2.aspx
- Do You Know Your Drinking IQ? <https://www.militarymentalhealth.org/?keyword=DRINKINGIQ>
- Military OneSource: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
- Military Pathways: http://www.militarymentalhealth.org/alcohol_abuse_facts/
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA): <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>
- Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Program (NADAP): http://www.public.navy.mil/BUPERS-NPC/SUPPORT/21ST_CENTURY_SAILOR/NADAP/Pages/default2.aspx
- NMCPHC Alcohol and Drug Abuse: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/preventing-drug-alcohol-abuse/Pages/preventing-drug-alcohol-abuse.aspx>
- NMCPHC Wounded, Ill, and Injured Substance Abuse: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/Pages/substance-abuse.aspx>
- USMC Substance Abuse Program:
https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MF/G_Behavioral%20Health/C_Substance%20Abuse

¹Alcohol Use Disorders. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-use-disorders>. Accessed November 2012.

^{2,3,5} Alcohol and Public Health. Fact Sheets. Alcohol Use and Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>. Updated 1 October 2012. Accessed November 2012.

^{4,6} Alcohol and Public Health. Frequently Asked Questions. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>. Updated 7 November 2012. Accessed January 2013.