

Binge Drinking

What is Binge Drinking?

Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks for men or four or more drinks for women in less than 2 hours. Such alcohol consumption will cause the drinker to become overly intoxicated in a short period of time. While some believe that college encourages binge drinking, students that binge drank in high school are also three times more likely to binge drink in college.

Why Binge Drink?

Some students may binge drink because they think it brings social status, while others drink because of peer pressure and academic stress. Admittedly, others may binge because they have poorly developed skills and are otherwise incapable of keeping their drinking under control. For others yet, binge drinking may have become a habit that is too hard to break. Interestingly, over 47 % of college students surveyed nationally, said that they drank just to get drunk.

Effects of Binge Drinking

A higher percentage of binge drinkers than non-binge drinkers reported having experienced alcohol-related problems since the beginning of the school year. Frequent binge drinkers were *more likely* than non-binge drinkers to:

- Miss class and fall behind in school
- Damaged property
- Been hurt or injured
- Engaged in unplanned sexual activity plus failed to use protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Gotten in trouble with campus police
- Driven a car after drinking

Impact on Other Students

50% of UWSP students responding to a campus study (2005) reported experiencing at least one adverse consequence of another student's drinking during the school year. Further, at colleges with high binge drinking rates:

- 71% had sleep or study interrupted
- 57% had to take care of an intoxicated student
- 36% had been insulted or humiliated
- 23% had experienced an unwanted sexual experience
- 23% had a serious argument
- 16% had property damaged
- 11% had been pushed, hit or assaulted
- 1% had been the victim of a sexual assault or "date rape"

Long Term Health Problems

In addition to acute negative consequences of binge drinking, there are long-term health complications:

- Alcohol related liver disease
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Pancreatitis

Get a Sober Driver...Get Help

Don't drink and drive. Ensure that one of your friends, or you, will remain sober and in control. If you have been drinking heavily, there are risks for serious health problems. Because many of these health problems are treatable, it is important to see a health care provider for help. Your provider will be able to advise you about your health and your drinking.

The Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study
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