



## Binge Drinking: A Women's Health Problem

Binge drinking is a dangerous behavior, and it is now being recognized as a women's health problem. Girls set a pattern of alcohol consumption in high school. This is correlated with alcohol consumption by adult women. Many people believe that only men binge drink, but this research lets us understand that it is also a women's health problem.

About 23,000 women and [girls](#) die each year from drinking too much. Binge drinking is most prevalent among young women aged 18-24 (24.2%). For those who engage in binge drinking, these young women also had the highest frequency at 3.6 episodes per month and the greatest intensity at 6.4 drinks per episode compared to other age groups.

For high school girls, 37.9% reported alcohol use within the last 30 days, and 19.8% of these girls reporting participating in binge drinking. This means that over half of teenaged girls who drink alcohol also binge drink.

### Consequences of Binge Drinking

Excessive alcohol use may cause:

- unintentional injuries

- violence
- liver disease
- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- stroke
- various cancers
- reduced cognitive function
- alcohol dependence

Binge drinking is also associated with higher risk of acquiring HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), as well as other sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies, miscarriages, and low birth weight. Women who binge drink also have a higher risk of exposing a developing fetus to high blood alcohol concentrations, increasing the risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

## A Women's Health Problem

At the state level, alcohol consumption among high school girls is strongly correlated with alcohol consumption by adult women. When teen girls drink more, adult women who live in the same state tend to also drink more. This may reflect the influence adult drinking has on youths and the fact that youths often obtain alcohol from adults.

Another reason binge drinking is considered a women's health problem is due to the unique consequences for women. Women may experience unintended pregnancies. Those who are pregnant may have miscarriages or low birth weight as a result of alcohol use or binge drinking. Women who binge drink while pregnant also have a higher risk of exposing a developing fetus to high blood alcohol concentrations. This may increase the risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Alcohol use in any amount is illegal for people under 21. We urge you to help keep alcohol out of the hands of those under 21. Drinking exposes teens to additional risks compared to adults. Additionally, the earlier someone tries a substance, the more likely it is that he or she will develop a diagnosable problem with that substance.