



Drinking Habits of Friends Can Increase Alcohol Consumption

The drinking habits of your social group appears to be directly related to the amount of alcohol a person consumes. Researchers studied the drinking habits and social networks of 12,000 participants over a 30-year period. They found that those who had friends or close relatives who drank heavily were 50% more likely to drink heavily themselves. The opposite was also true. Those individuals whose friends were abstinent were less likely to drink.

In addition, changes in alcohol consumption for a social network had a statistically significant impact on the individuals in that group. In other words, if your friends drink more, you are likely to drink more. If they reduce (or increase) their use, you are likely to do the same.

These results only held true for family and friends—not coworkers or nearby neighbors. Researchers conclude: “Network phenomena seem to influence alcohol consumption behavior. This has implications for clinical and public health interventions and further supports group-level interventions to reduce problematic drinking.”

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"The Spread of Alcohol Consumption Behavior in a Large Social Network" Conclusion

Research in Action

ASAP Cincinnati [teaches clients](#) that you need to avoid those who have drinking or drugging problems if you want to remain sober. Our [treatment](#) helps teens find alternative activities and friends to support their sobriety. Getting involved in sports, extra curricular activities, youth groups, and [12-step groups](#) help promote and maintain sobriety.