

# What is a 'borg'? College drinking TikTok trend is 'very concerning,' can lead to alcohol poisoning

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Credit: Flickr user oddharmonic

The days of jungle juice and kegs at college parties could be over, as a new "very concerning" drinking trend is all the rage—sending numerous students to the hospital for alcohol poisoning, and worrying officials about potentially fatal consequences.

A "borg," or a "black out rage gallon," could easily be spotted at UMass Amherst over the weekend, as wasted students carried their own plastic gallon containers that were jam packed with booze.

In a typical borg, the gallon container is half full of water, with a whopping fifth of alcohol (about 17 shots), and a liquid flavor enhancer like Liquid I.V. Hydration Multiplier. The person who creates the borg labels it with a fun name, and holds on to it throughout the party.

The college drinking trend has gone viral on TikTok, where [social media users](#) claim that drinking from a borg can cut down on the chances of a hangover. That's simply not true and it's very troubling that some students believe that, according to experts.

"Alcohol poisoning is very real, it does exist, and drinking from a borg doesn't prevent that, even if TikTok says it," Kelly Johnson-Arbor, a medical toxicologist, told the Herald on Monday.

"TikToks will capture peoples' attention, but they don't show what happens in real life," added Johnson-Arbor, of the National Capital Poison Center. "They are short videos that are meant to show a fun thing, an exciting thing, but they don't show you the aftermath of drinking that."

What can happen to people, as seen at UMass Amherst during Saturday's Blarney Blowout ahead of St. Patrick's Day, is they could end up in the hospital.

Or it could be even worse.

"A potential consequence is death," said the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Director George Koob. "Alcohol misuse is not good for your liver, and every organ in your body is affected when alcohol is misused in high doses.

"Alcohol becomes a toxin as you increase the amount you're taking in, especially in a short period of time," he added.

Borg drinking has become popular in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as students are focused on avoiding [infectious diseases](#), Johnson-Arbor said. Students also like borgs because there's no fear of being roofied like in jungle juice.

"But 17 shots mixed with water, them saying that it's safe and will prevent a hangover, that's very concerning," Johnson-Arbor said.

"There's no evidence that mixing 17 shots with a half a gallon of water is effective with avoiding a hangover."

A Boston Public Health Commission spokesperson said in a statement about borgs, "Binge drinking is very dangerous and potentially life threatening—there is no safe or smart way to do it. We'd also like to remind [college students](#) that [underage drinking](#) is illegal and can lead to serious legal and academic consequences."

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