

# Binge drinking rampant among Americans

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(HealthDay)—Americans are on a binge drinking binge.

More than 17 billion binge drinks were consumed by American adults in

2015, a new federal government study shows. That works out to an average of 470 drinks per [binge drinker](#).

The study also found that 1 in 6 (37 million) American adults binge drink about once a week and down an average of seven drinks per binge.

"This study shows that binge drinkers are consuming a huge number of drinks per year, greatly increasing their chances of harming themselves and others," said study co-author Dr. Robert Brewer, lead researcher in the alcohol program at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The findings also show the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to prevent binge [drinking](#), focusing on reducing both the number of times people binge drink and the amount they drink when they binge," he added in a CDC news release.

Binge drinking—defined as having five or more drinks for men, or four or more drinks for women, in about two hours—can lead to dangerous driving, [unsafe sex](#) and violent behavior. It also increases the risk of major health problems such as cancer, heart disease and liver failure, the report said.

Binge drinking was more common among adults aged 18 to 34, but more than half of the number of binge drinks consumed in 2015 were by adults aged 35 and older. About 4 in 5 binge drinks were consumed by men, the researchers found.

Education and income also played a part in who was most likely to binge drink the most. Those with household incomes of less than \$25,000 a year and with less than a [high school education](#) consumed many more binge drinks a year than those with higher levels of income and education, the report showed.

The most alcohol was consumed by binge drinkers in Arkansas, Hawaii, Kentucky and Mississippi. Meanwhile, the least was consumed in Washington, D.C., New Jersey, New York and Washington state, according to the study.

Each year, binge drinking accounts for more than half of the 88,000 alcohol-related deaths and three-quarters of the \$249 billion in economic costs associated with [excessive drinking](#), the researchers said.

The findings were published March 16 in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [binge drinking](#).

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