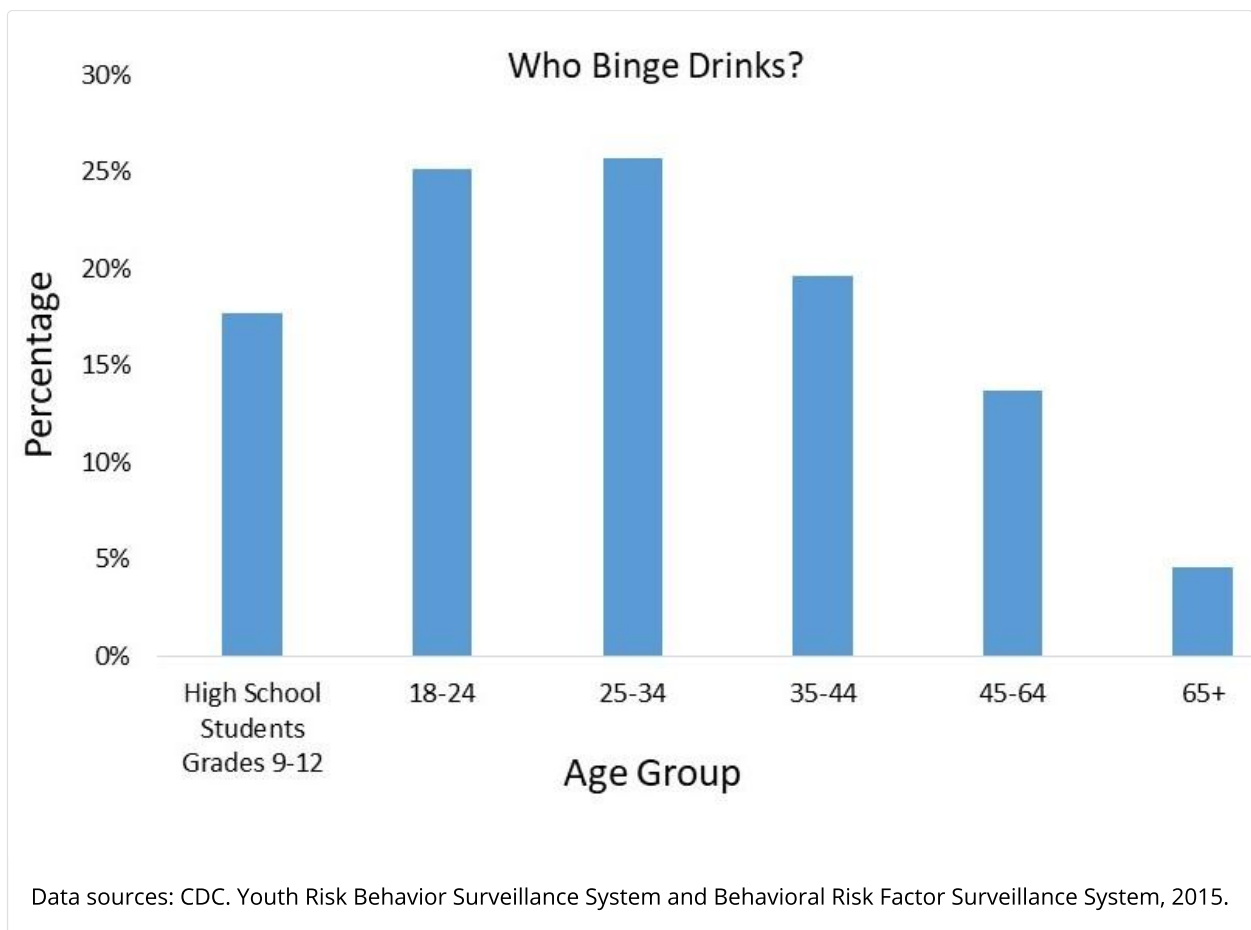


Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is a serious but **preventable** public health problem.

Binge drinking is the most common, costly, and deadly pattern of **excessive alcohol use** in the United States.^{1,2,3} Binge drinking is defined as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 g/dl or above. This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks or women consume 4 or more drinks in about 2 hours.⁴ Most people who binge drink do not have a severe **alcohol use disorder**.¹

Who binge drinks?



- One in six US adults binge drinks about four times a month, consuming about seven drinks per binge. This results in 17 billion total binge drinks consumed by adults annually, or 467 binge drinks per binge drinker.⁵
- Binge drinking is most common among younger adults aged 18–34 years, but more than half of the total binge drinks are consumed by those aged 35 and older.⁵
- Binge drinking is twice as common among men than among women. Four in five total binge drinks are consumed by men.⁵
- Binge drinking is more common among people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more and higher educational levels. Binge drinkers with lower incomes and educational levels, however, consume more binge drinks per year.⁵
- Over 90% of U.S. adults who drink **excessively** report binge drinking in the past 30 days.¹
- Most people younger than age 21 who drink alcohol report binge drinking, often consuming large amounts.^{6,7}

Binge drinking has serious risks.

Binge drinking is associated with many health problems,⁸⁻¹⁰ including the following:

- Unintentional injuries such as [car crashes](#), falls, burns, and [alcohol poisoning](#).
- Violence including homicide, suicide, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Unintended pregnancy and poor pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage and stillbirth.
- [Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders](#).
- Sudden infant death syndrome.
- Chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, and liver disease.
- [Cancer](#) of the breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon.
- Memory and learning problems.
- Alcohol use disorders.

There are about 2,200 alcohol poisoning deaths a year in the US. These can be prevented.



Read more about the CDC study that found that excessive drinking in the U.S is a drain on the American economy.

Binge drinking costs everyone.

- Drinking too much, including binge drinking, cost the United States \$249 billion in 2010, or \$2.05 a drink. These costs resulted from losses in workplace productivity, health care expenditures, criminal justice costs, and other expenses. Binge drinking was responsible for 77% of these costs, or \$191 billion.²

Preventing Binge Drinking

The [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) [↗](#) recommends evidence-based interventions to [prevent](#) binge drinking and related harms.¹¹ Recommended strategies include:

- Using pricing strategies, including increasing alcohol taxes.
- Limiting the number of retail alcohol outlets that sell alcoholic beverages in a given area.
- Holding alcohol retailers responsible for the harms caused by illegal alcohol sales to minors or intoxicated patrons (dram shop liability).
- Restricting access to alcohol by maintaining limits on the days and hours of alcohol retail sales.
- Consistently enforcing laws against underage drinking and alcohol-impaired driving.
- Maintaining government controls on alcohol sales (avoiding privatization).

The [US Preventive Services Task Force](#) [↗](#) also recommends screening and counseling for alcohol misuse in medical settings.

References

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