

## Binge Drinking in Women and Men

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol levels to 0.08 g/dL (also the legal driving limit in many jurisdictions). This typically occurs after 4 standard drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours.

### What is a Standard Drink?



## Screening For At-Risk Alcohol Use

### CAGE Questions for Alcohol Use

Screens for excessive drinking and alcohol use disorder.

Have you ever felt you needed to Cut down on your drinking?	No 0	Yes +1
Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?	No 0	Yes +1
Have you ever felt Guilty about drinking?	No 0	Yes +1
Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning (Eye-opener) to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?	No 0	Yes +1

Various screening tools are available to health professionals, including the CAGE questionnaire. Answering “yes” to all four questions is associated with a 90% chance of having an AUD.

## Alcohol Use Disorder and Referral to Treatment

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a serious public health problem. An estimated 88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the fourth leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Once viewed as a moral failing or character flaw, AUD is now widely recognized as a chronic brain disease with potential for both recovery and relapse (similar to other diseases like cancer). Approximately 6.2 percent or 15.1 million adults in the United States ages 18 and older suffered from AUD in 2015. This includes 9.8 million men and 5.3 million women. HIV infection and various psychiatric disorders (depression, anxiety, PTSD) are sometimes co-morbid with AUD, complicating its effective treatment and serving as triggers for relapse. NIAAA’s Alcohol Treatment Navigator provides individuals and health care providers with links to local resources for treatment.

### Physiological Effects of Alcohol at Various Blood Alcohol Levels

.02-.03	Slight euphoria and loss of shyness, mild relaxation. No loss of coordination.
.04-.06	Feeling of well-being, relaxation, lower inhibitions. Euphoria.
.07-.09	Continuing euphoria. Some impairment of balance, speech, vision, reaction time. Reduced judgment, caution & self control.
.10-.12	Loss of good judgment. Significant impairment of motor coordination. Slurred speech. Euphoria.
.13-.15	Lack of physical control, gross motor impairment. Increasing dysphoria (anxiety & restlessness). Severely impaired judgment.
.16-.19	Dysphoria, confusion. Possible nausea.
.20	May need help to stand or walk. Possible loss of memory, nausea, & vomiting.
.25	Severe impairment of mental, physical & sensory function.
.30	Stupor. Possible loss of consciousness.
.40	Onset of coma. Possible death due to respiratory arrest.

### FIND YOUR WAY TO ALCOHOL TREATMENT

The search for alcohol treatment can feel overwhelming. We'll help you focus your search to find options that increase the chance for success.

NIAAA ALCOHOL TREATMENT  
**NAVIGATOR**  
*Pointing the way to evidence-based care*

<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov>