

Binge Drinking

Binge drinking* is a dangerous behavior for all ages. Drinking too much, including binge drinking, causes more than 79,000 deaths in the US each year and is a leading preventable cause of death. Binge drinking has not been well-recognized as a public health problem. More than 15% of US adults report binge drinking. It is most common in men, adults in the 18–34 age range, and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more. This is a community issue, not just an individual issue. This CDC report points out how common binge drinking is and what can be done about it.

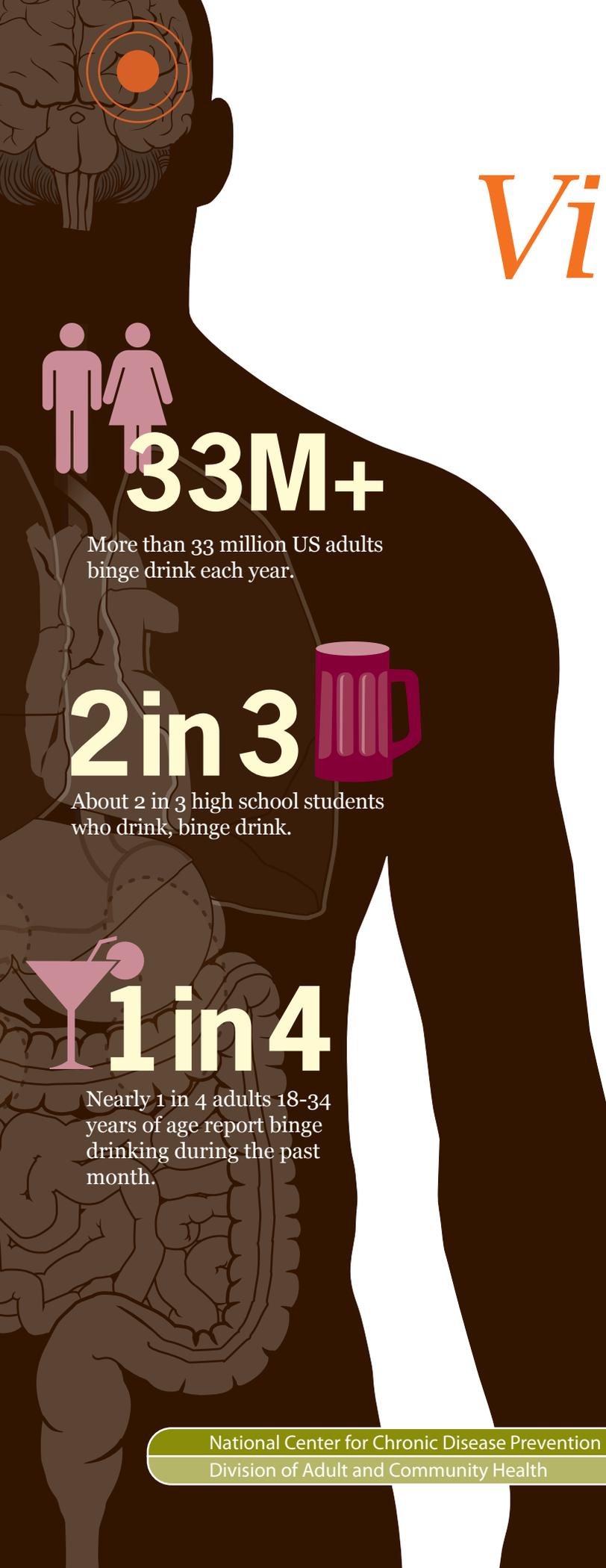
*Binge drinking means men drinking 5 or more alcoholic drinks within a short period of time or women drinking 4 or more drinks during a short period of time.

Learn what you can do to reduce binge drinking.

See page 4

Want to learn more? Visit

[www !\[\]\(003082e50e3009141f59bd5df831749f_img.jpg\) http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns)



Binge Drinking

Problem

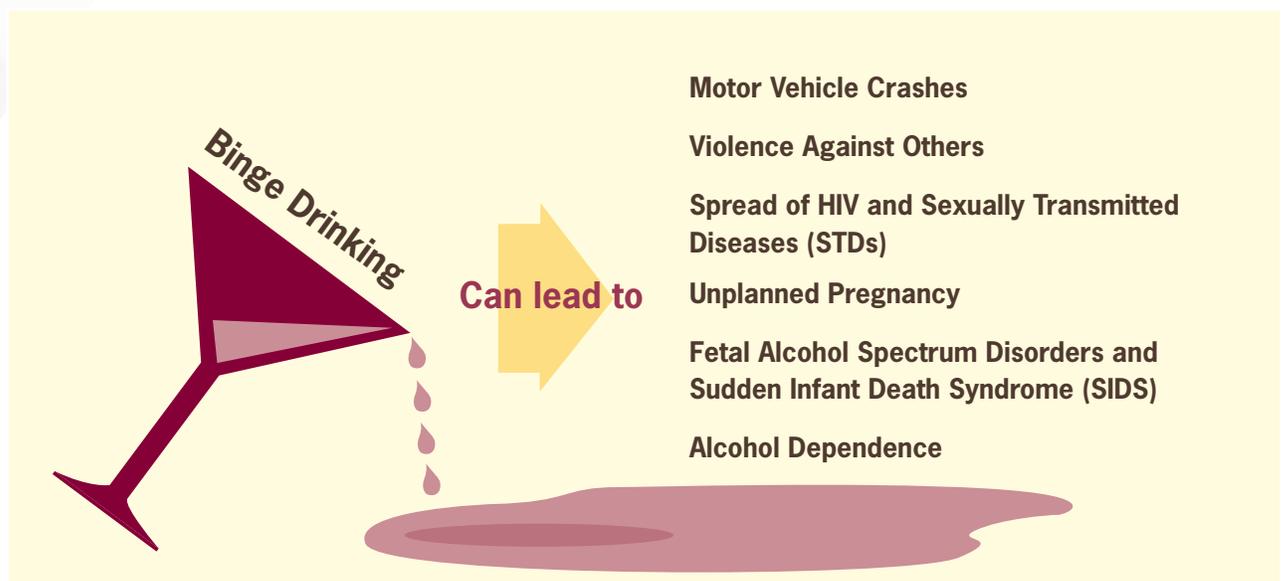
Binge drinking is common and dangerous but is not a well-recognized public health problem.

1. Binge drinking is common across all ages.

- ◇ Binge drinking happens more than 4 million times a day in the US among adults.
- ◇ Binge drinking is most common among men, adults in the 18-34 age range, and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more.
- ◇ About 2 in 3 high school students who drink alcohol report binge drinking during the past month.
- ◇ The drinking behavior of adults affects the drinking behavior of youth by the example it sets.
- ◇ Binge drinking can harm the individual, family, and community in many ways.

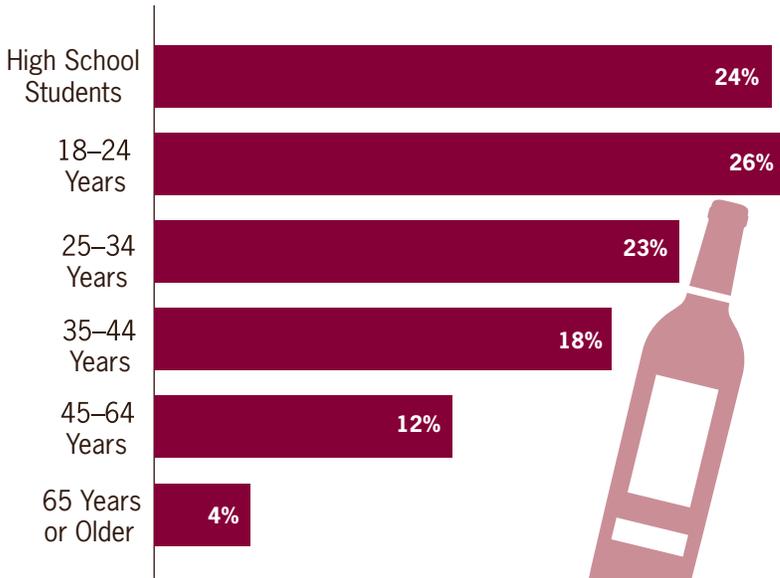
2. Binge drinking is a major public health problem.

- ◇ The percentage of adults who binge drink has not declined for more than 15 years.
- ◇ Sales information on alcohol suggests people may be drinking even more than they report.
- ◇ Binge drinkers usually become impaired.
- ◇ Binge drinking increases the chances of car crashes, violence against others, spread of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unplanned pregnancy, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and babies born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.
- ◇ Most people who binge drink are not alcohol-dependent or alcoholics.



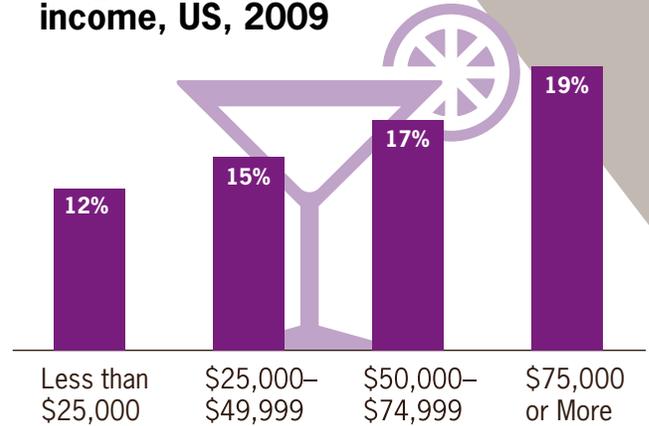
Who Drinks Too Much?

Binge drinking by age, US, 2009



SOURCE: High school binge drinking values: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, US. Adult binge drinking values: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, US.

Binge drinking increases with household income, US, 2009

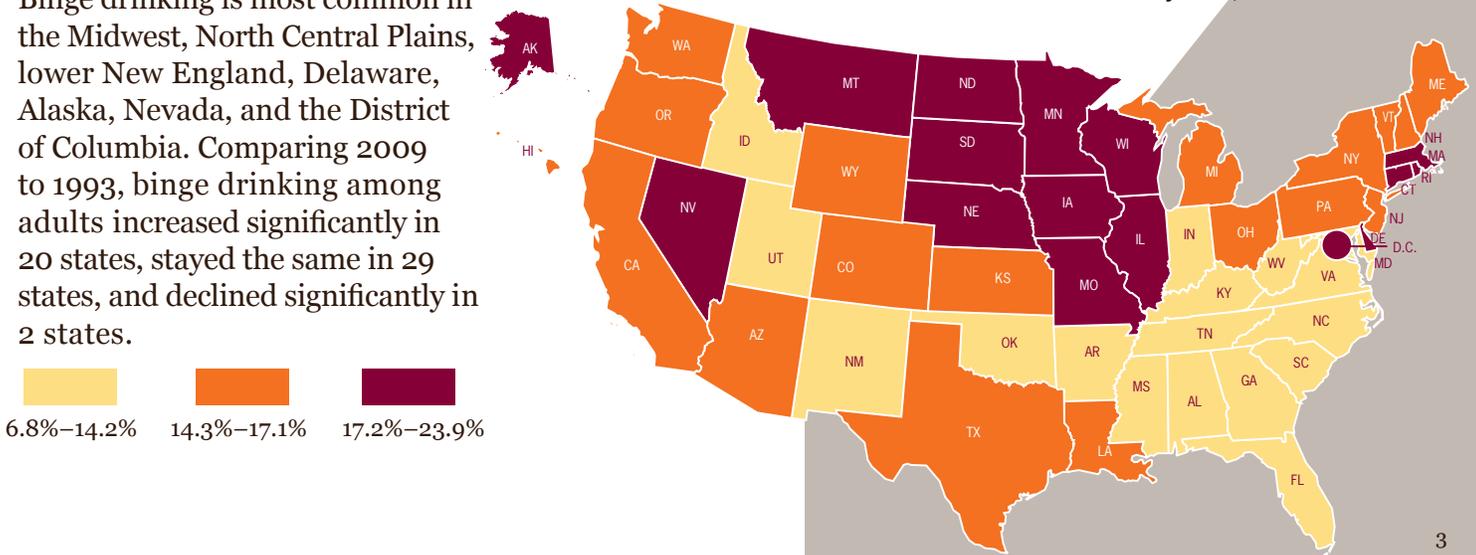


SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, adults aged 18 and older, US.

US State Info

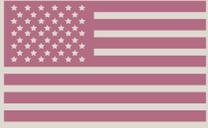
Binge drinking varies from state to state, and estimates of adults who binge drink range from 6.8% in Tennessee to 23.9% in Wisconsin. Binge drinking is most common in the Midwest, North Central Plains, lower New England, Delaware, Alaska, Nevada, and the District of Columbia. Comparing 2009 to 1993, binge drinking among adults increased significantly in 20 states, stayed the same in 29 states, and declined significantly in 2 states.

Prevalence of Binge Drinking Among Adults, 2009 – Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, US.



What Can Be Done

Binge drinking is a dangerous but preventable public health problem that requires action at all levels of society.



The US Government can

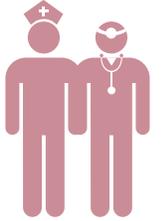
- ◇ Promote programs and policies that work to prevent binge drinking.
- ◇ Provide states and communities with information and tools to put into practice prevention strategies that work.
- ◇ Evaluate program and policy effectiveness.
- ◇ Track trends in binge drinking.



States and communities can

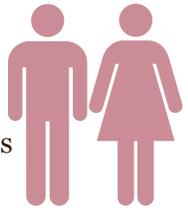
- ◇ Review interventions that are known to work to reduce binge drinking. Local leaders should consider adopting one or more interventions, choosing those that are feasible, efficient, and acceptable in their jurisdiction.
- ◇ Reduce alcohol marketing to youth.
- ◇ Grow partnerships between schools, community organizations, law enforcement, and public health agencies to reduce binge drinking.
- ◇ More information about effective local interventions can be found in The Guide to Community Preventive Services at <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>.

Doctors, nurses, and other providers can



- ◇ Choose not to binge drink themselves.
- ◇ Screen patients for binge drinking and use behavioral counseling to reduce problem drinking. More information can be found at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/uspdrin.htm>.
- ◇ Support community efforts to reduce binge drinking.

All people can



- ◇ Choose not to binge drink themselves and help others not to do it.
- ◇ Not drink and drive.
- ◇ Choose not to drink if they are children or teens, pregnant, or may become pregnant.
- ◇ Talk with their health care providers about their drinking behavior and request counseling if they drink too much.
- ◇ Participate in community efforts to prevent underage and binge drinking.

www  <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns>

www  <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>

CS217272B

For more information, please contact

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Web: www.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333

Publication date: 10/05/2010