

Alcohol Awareness MONTH

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Observed every April, Alcohol Awareness Month is meant to raise awareness about alcohol use and break the stigma by discussing how alcohol-use disorders affect individuals, families and communities. This year is especially critical as COVID-19 restrictions and stress can increase your susceptibility to substance misuse, addiction and relapse. In fact, alcohol sales in the United States have grown nearly 30% in the last year. Alcohol abuse can affect both your personal and professional life. Prolonged drinking puts you at risk for developing serious health complications—such as high blood pressure, heart disease, liver disease and stroke—and can trigger other life-threatening consequences.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Alcohol use disorder can be mild, moderate or severe, based on the number of symptoms you experience. Keep in mind that symptoms often occur at the same time.

Common physical and behavioral signs and symptoms of alcohol misuse include the following:

- Feeling irritable or experiencing mood swings
- Having poor coordination
- Showing signs of slurred speech
- Experiencing blackouts or short-term memory loss
- Isolating from friends and family
- Failing to complete responsibilities and obligations at home or work
- Drinking alone or in secrecy
- Making excuses for drinking, such as to relax or deal with stress
- Engaging in risky behavior, such as drunk driving

Alcohol use disorder can include both periods of alcohol intoxication and withdrawal symptoms—such as sweating, shaking and nausea.

If you or a loved one are concerned about alcohol use, talk to a doctor or use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

One way to improve your mental health is through self-care. Self-care looks different for every person since it involves doing things that you enjoy or need.

Here are some ideas for how to practice self-care:

- Live healthy by eating well, getting enough sleep and exercising regularly.
- Connect regularly with friends and family who encourage and support you.
- Pamper yourself by watching your favorite TV show, taking a bath, applying a face mask, getting a massage or reading a book.
- Find ways to relax, including meditating, practicing yoga, going on a nature walk or baking.

The goal is to try to do something you enjoy every day. If you have concerns about a loved one's or your mental health, contact a doctor or mental health professional.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month



According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, an estimated **88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually**

In 2010, alcohol misuse cost the United States **\$249.0 billion**



Approximately



62,000 men

26,000 women

die from alcohol-related causes annually

Alcohol is the third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.

The first is tobacco and the second is poor diet and physical inactivity.



Moderate alcohol consumption, according to the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,



is up to 1 drink per day for women



and up to 2 drinks per day for men



In 2009, alcohol-related liver disease was the primary cause **of almost 1 in 3 liver transplants** in the United States

