



**ALCOHOL
AWARENESS
MONTH**
APRIL



Did You Know?

April 2022

April + Alcohol: April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Supported and sponsored by the National Council for Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), Alcohol Awareness Month is a national public health and safety campaign. With proms, weddings, graduations and warmer weather festivities starting up again very shortly, now is the perfect time to evaluate alcohol's effects and impacts on a user's life. Although April is quickly coming to a close, alcohol misuse is one of our nation's biggest public health risks and it is imperative that we take time to educate ourselves on the potential negative outcomes from its use year-round.

What You Should Know:

- A young person's brain is not fully developed until they are well into their 20's. Consuming alcohol before this time can permanently alter the brain's chemistry and increase risk for memory problems and substance use disorders later in life.
- 95,000 Americans die from alcohol-related causes annually, making it the third leading cause of preventable death in the US.
- Alcohol use is often linked to tragic incidents, fatal traffic accidents, burns, falls and instances of violence. The effects of alcohol use often spread beyond the health of the individual who was drinking.
- Data from a national survey of U.S. adults found that excessive drinking increased during the pandemic more than 21%.
- In 2014, Erie County enacted the Social Host Law that holds adults accountable if underage drinkers consume alcohol on their property. The penalties include fines ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 and up to a year in jail.
- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports, "In 2019, 25.8 percent of people ages 18 and older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month." Binge drinking can be defined as excessive alcohol consumption (4 or more drinks for females, or 5 or more drinks for males) within about 2 hours. Binge drinking is incredibly risky and can lead to instances of blackout or death.
- According to the CDC, long-term health risks of heavy alcohol use include: high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems, cancer (of the breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, voice box, liver, colon, and rectum), weakening of the immune system, learning and memory problems, mental health problems, social problems, and alcohol use disorders.

What You Can Do:

- **Love Your Limits:** Use in moderation is always healthy and smart, especially when it comes to alcohol. If you are of legal age and choose to consume alcohol, be sure to drink within safe limits. Keep track of how much alcohol you are consuming within one sitting. Also, do not drink and drive. Have a sober designated driver decided on prior to any situation involving alcohol.
- **Safe Party Place:** Provide a safe, alcohol-free environment to have fun for you and your guests when hosting a party or event. If you are celebrating elsewhere, check-in with the host to discuss the need for safer alternatives (mocktails) if alcohol will be present.
- **Be the Example:** If you see something unsafe, say something. Alcohol Awareness Month is all about education and spreading knowledge to keep you and your community safe when it comes to the risks and dangers of alcohol misuse.

Information obtained from: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); [niaaa.nih.gov](https://www.niaaa.nih.gov); [pipnj.org](https://www.pipnj.org); [shatterproof.org](https://www.shatterproof.org)

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The Prevention Council of Erie County, publishes Did You Know, a regular update about alcohol & other drugs -- America's #1 public health problem. The Prevention Council • 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716-831-2298 • www.thepreventioncouncil.org