

ALCOHOL MYTHS VS FACTS

FACT SHEET #2

The 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports that 139.7 million Americans age 12 or older were past month alcohol users, 65.8 million people were binge drinkers in the past month, and 16 million were heavy drinkers in the past month. (*1)



Myth #1: Alcohol is not harmful. It's legal.

FACT: Our brains are not fully developed until around the age of 25. Drinking alcohol can actually affect how the brain develops. Also, excessive alcohol use can increase a person's risk of stroke, liver cirrhosis, alcoholic hepatitis, cancer, and other serious health conditions regardless of age. (*1)



Myth #2: Alcohol won't get you into trouble.

FACT: All states and Washington, D.C. have 21-year-old minimum-drinking-age laws. In Pennsylvania, if you are caught driving under the influence, you can pay fines and legal fees ranging from \$2,000-\$10,000, pay for and attend DUI education classes, lose your driver's license and even face jail time as an adult. (*1,2)

Myth #3: Drinking alcohol is cool.

FACT: According to the 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), 75% of Adams County youth believe it is "wrong" or "very wrong" for someone their age to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day. 89% of Adams County youth believe that their parents would think it was wrong have to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly everyday. (*3)



Myth #4: You can sober up quickly by taking a cold shower or drinking coffee.

FACT: The only cure for sobering up is time. Coffee, cold showers and supplements won't help you. All it takes is one drink for you to have alcohol in your system. If you are planning on traveling, do not drink and never drive while under the influence. Remember, buzzed driving is drunk driving!



Alcohol including beer, wine, and hard liquor is the drug used most often by adolescents today. About 2.3 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in 2019 drank alcohol in the past month, and 1.2 million of these adolescents binge drank in that period. Approximately 14.5 million people age 12 or older had an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD).^(*1,3)

Myth #5: Alcohol helps me feel less anxious.

FACT: According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), anxiety is a mental health disorder that can be caused by prolonged drinking in some instances. Substance-induced anxiety can occur in those who have another anxiety disorder, such as General Anxiety Disorder, and adding this additional anxiety issue only exacerbates the effects of the initial disorder.^(*1)



Myth #6: Alcohol is a stimulant.

FACT: Alcohol is a depressant, otherwise known as a "downer." The cerebral cortex is the part of the brain which controls judgment and good choices. This is one of the first parts of the brain to be affected by alcohol. Although the result can be excitable behavior, inhibitions can be lost in the process.^(*4)



Myth #7: Drinking helps me relax at parties.

FACT: Using alcohol as a way to relax during a party is irresponsible. Alcohol can lead to risky behaviors such as driving while impaired. It may even cause you to fall asleep while driving, leading to a crash. It can lead to impulsive activities or increase the likelihood of aggressive acts like getting into a fight.^(*1)



*Sources

1. SAMHSA.gov - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
2. Impaired driving. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://www.penndot.gov/travelinpa/safety/trafficsafetyanddrivertopics/pages/impaired-driving.aspx>
3. Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. 2019. "2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey"
4. Myths about alcohol. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <https://dmh.mo.gov/alcohol-drug/satop/myths>

