

People in Oregon need a new way to think about alcohol

A lot of us drink excessively.

Many people in Oregon – more than 1 in 5 – drink excessively. And while most people who drink excessively are not affected by alcoholism or alcohol use disorder, excessive drinking does increase your risk for developing an alcohol use disorder later in life.



Drink less, live more.

Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death among people in Oregon, responsible for more than 2,000 deaths each year. Across the U.S., excessive alcohol consumption accounted for 1 in 5 of deaths among adults aged 20 to 49 years.



Excessive drinking can cause:

- Prostate cancer
- Colon cancer
- High blood pressure, strokes and heart disease
- Cancers of the head and neck
- Depression, anxiety and memory loss
- Breast cancer
- Three types of liver disease

Beyond our bodies.

Drinking and motor vehicle deaths

The number of driving deaths that involve alcohol has more than **doubled** in Oregon in recent years, from 70 in 2010 to 191 in 2020. Oregon has one of the highest rates of alcohol-impaired driving deaths in the nation.

Harms can happen in a flash

It can take years for excessive drinking to cause heart disease or cancer. Or it can end in death in a matter of hours or minutes, when it contributes to **suicide, violence, and falls or other injuries**. Binge drinking can lead to death by alcohol poisoning — most common among middle-aged men ages 35 to 64.

Uneven impact on communities

People in Oregon of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and at all income levels drink excessively. But the **harms fall disproportionately** on Black and Indigenous communities and people with lower incomes and less education, who experience higher rates of alcohol-related diseases and other harms.

Heavy costs.

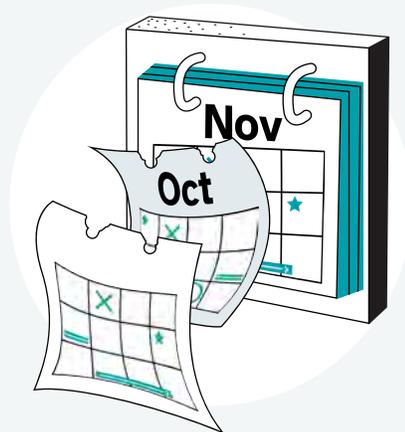
Excessive drinking imposes heavy costs on all of us whether we drink or not – from children and families to businesses and communities. Economically, excessive drinking costs Oregon \$4.8 billion per year.

Excessive drinking includes binge drinking and heavy drinking.

Excessive drinking will mean something different for each person, depending on physical and other factors such as age, medication interactions, pregnancy or gender.



You're **binge drinking** when you consume 4 to 5 drinks or more on a single occasion — at a party or restaurant, for example, or at home on your couch.



You're **heavy drinking** when you consume, on average, more than 1-2 drinks every night over the course of a week.

Rethink the Drink is an initiative of the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division. Our goal is to decrease excessive drinking and the harm it causes individuals, families and communities throughout our state. Excessive alcohol consumption is a leading cause of preventable death among people in Oregon, responsible for more than 2,000 deaths each year. We can do more as a state to reduce the unnecessary death, disease and suffering that results from excessive drinking.