

CDC Wants Doctor Talks to Combat Excessive Drinking

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The U. S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is advocating for alcohol screening and brief counseling for adults and says those actions can reduce drinking on an occasion by 25 percent in people who drink too much.

Currently, only 1 in 6 (about 17 percent) of adults has ever talked with a doctor or other health professional about alcohol use. At the same time, CDC says at least 38 million adults drink too much. Drinking too much includes binge drinking, high weekly use, and any alcohol use by pregnant women or those under age 21. It causes about 88,000 deaths in the US each year, and costs the economy about \$224 billion.

Three out of four people in that group binge drink, defined as three or more drinks for women, four or more drinks for men in a sitting. (Moderate drinking is defined as one drink for a woman and two drinks for a man in any one sitting.)

Talking with patient about their drinking is the first step of screening and brief counseling, which involves:

- Using a set of questions to screen all patients for how much and how often they drink.
- Counseling patients about the health dangers of drinking too much, including women who are (or might be) pregnant.
- Referring only those few patients who need specialized treatment for alcohol dependence.

Doctors and other health professionals can use alcohol screening and brief counseling to help people who are drinking too much to drink less. The Affordable Care Act requires new health insurance plans to cover this service without a co-payment.

To find out more about the CDC's Alcohol Screening and Counseling Vital Signs announcement, [please click here](#).

To read about NCADD's "Understanding Alcohol and Alcoholism", [please click here](#).

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According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is advocating for alcohol screening and brief counseling because those actions can reduce drinking on an occasion by 25 percent in people who drink too much. Problem is that only 1 in 6 (about 17 percent) people has ever talked with their doctor or other health professional about alcohol use.

Why? Because at least 38 million adults drink too much and most are not alcoholics. The CDC defines as more than one drink for a woman and more than two drinks for a man in any one sitting. Three out of four people in that group binge drink, defined as three or more drinks for women, four or more drinks for men in a sitting.

Drinking too much includes binge drinking, high weekly use, and any alcohol use by pregnant women or those under age 21. It causes about 88,000 deaths in the US each year, and costs the economy about \$224 billion.

Talking with a patient about their drinking is the first step of screening and brief counseling, which involves:

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