

U.S. Adult Drinking Patterns

WHAT IS YOUR DRINKING PATTERN?	HOW COMMON IS THIS PATTERN?	HOW COMMON ARE ALCOHOL DISORDERS WITH THIS PATTERN?
<p>Based on the following limits:</p> <p>On any DAY—never more than 4 drinks (men) or 3 drinks (women) and in a typical WEEK—no more than 14 drinks (men) or 7 drinks (women)</p>	<p>Percentage of U.S. adults aged 18 or older*</p>	<p>Combined prevalence of alcohol abuse and dependence†</p>
<p>Never exceed the daily or weekly limits (2 out of 3 people in this group abstain or drink fewer than 12 drinks a year)</p>	 <p>72%</p>	<p>Less than 1 in 100</p>
<p>Exceed only the daily limit (more than 8 out of 10 in this group exceed the daily limit <i>less than once a week</i>)</p>	 <p>16%</p>	<p>1 in 5</p>
<p>Exceed both daily and weekly limits (8 out of 10 in this group exceed the daily limit <i>once a week or more</i>)</p>	 <p>10%</p>	<p>Almost 1 in 2</p>

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much: A Clinician's Guide. 2005 Edition. NIH publication no. 05-3769. Available at http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/CliniciansGuide2005/clinicians_guide.htm.

*Not included in the chart, for simplicity, are the 2% of U.S. adults who exceed only the weekly limits. The combined prevalence of alcohol use disorders in this group is 8%.

† Alcohol abuse is present if your patient's drinking repeatedly caused or contributed to one or more of the following in the past 12 months: bodily harm (drinking and driving, operating machinery, swimming), relationship trouble (family or friends), role failure (interference with home, work or school obligations) or run-ins with the law (arrests or other legal problems). Alcohol dependence is present if in the past 12 months your patient has experienced three or more of the following: not been able to stick to drinking limits (repeatedly gone over them), not been able to cut down or stop (repeated failed attempts), shown tolerance (needed to drink a lot more to get the same effect), shown signs of withdrawal (tremors, sweating, nausea or insomnia when trying to quit or cut down), kept drinking despite problems (recurrent physical or psychological problems), spent a lot of time drinking (or anticipating or recovering from drinking) or spent less time on other matters (activities that had been important or pleasurable).