

EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE IN NORTH CAROLINA

Excessive alcohol use is a **leading preventable cause** of death in North Carolina.

In 2022, there were **over 5,500** deaths due to excessive alcohol use in North Carolina.

90% of excessive drinkers are **not** alcohol dependent. Excessive drinking is associated with injuries, violence, and chronic conditions like stroke, hypertension, and some cancers.



– 2022 State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, Death Certificate Data, and CDC Alcohol Fact Sheets



EXAMPLES OF EXCESSIVE DRINKING

FOR WOMEN

HEAVY DRINKING: Consuming **8** or more drinks per week

BINGE DRINKING: Consuming **4 or more** drinks on an occasion

FOR MEN

HEAVY DRINKING: Consuming **15** or more drinks per week

BINGE DRINKING: Consuming **5 or more** drinks on an occasion

Any alcohol consumed by **pregnant persons** and those **under age 21**.

– CDC Alcohol Fact Sheets

The **top 5 alcohol-related fatal injuries** in North Carolina are **poisonings, motor vehicle traffic crashes, suicides, homicides, and fall injuries**.

– 2022 State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, Death Certificate Data



In 2022, **25%** of all traffic fatalities in North Carolina were alcohol related.

– NC DOT 2022 Crash Facts

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EXCESSIVE DRINKING:

CONTROL SYSTEM: Maintain state control of alcohol sales and avoid privatization of retail alcohol sales.

MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL HOST LIABILITY LAWS: These laws permit retail establishments to be held liable for injuries or harms caused by illegal service to intoxicated or underage customers.

INCREASE ALCOHOL TAXES: Increase the price of alcohol by raising alcohol taxes.

REGULATE ALCOHOL OUTLET DENSITY: Continue to limit the number of businesses selling and distributing alcohol in neighborhoods.

INCREASE ELECTRONIC SCREENING AND BRIEF INTERVENTIONS: Electronically screen adults for excessive drinking using validated questions, have a brief intervention with those that screen positive.

CONTINUE TO LIMIT THE DAYS AND HOURS ALCOHOL SALES OCCUR: Maintain or decrease days and hours that alcohol is sold.



In NC, **19%** of high school students said they are currently drinking alcohol. Of those high school students who drink, **50%** binge drink, **36%** usually drink liquor, and **43%** usually obtained alcohol through someone, such as family or friends, giving it to them versus buying it themselves.

– 2021 NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey



In NC, **nearly half** of adults currently drink. Among those who drink, **12%** drink heavily and **34%** binge drink at least once a month.

– 2022 NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



Excessive alcohol use cost NC **roughly \$9.7 billion** in 2017.

– 2017 Gora Combs et al. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35504714/>

For more information please see: **The Community Guide**
www.thecommunityguide.org/topic/excessive-alcohol-consumption



NC Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health • Injury and Violence Prevention Branch • <https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhs.gov> • NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. • 6/2024