



## Adult alcohol use in Multnomah County

Alcohol is the most widely used addictive substance in Oregon. More men drink than women, men are 2½ times more likely to binge-drink, and are much more likely to die of alcohol-related causes. The rate of “heavy” alcohol use is about the same for men and women in Oregon. (See tables below and definitions under “Consumption rates”).

Although many adults practice occasional responsible drinking, consumption of alcohol is not safe for a significant portion of the population. Alcoholic beverages should not be consumed by some individuals, including those who cannot limit their alcohol intake, women who are pregnant or lactating or may want to become pregnant, individuals taking medications that can interact with alcohol, and those with specific medical conditions.

### CONSUMPTION RATES

About two-thirds of all men and more than half of all women have at least one drink of alcohol each month.

Men are more likely to binge-drink than women. More than one of five adult men binge-drinks each month; that is, they consume five or more drinks within a couple of hours.

For women, binge drinking is consumption of four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours. Even with a lower drink limit, women are less than half as likely to binge-drink as men.

Men and women in Oregon are equally likely to be heavy drinkers; that is, having more than two drinks per day for men or having more than one drink per day for women.

### EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol abuse and dependence are associated with significant social, psychological and physical problems for the user and others. About 18 percent of adults 18 to 25 years and six percent of adults 26 or older abuse or are dependent on alcohol and need treatment.

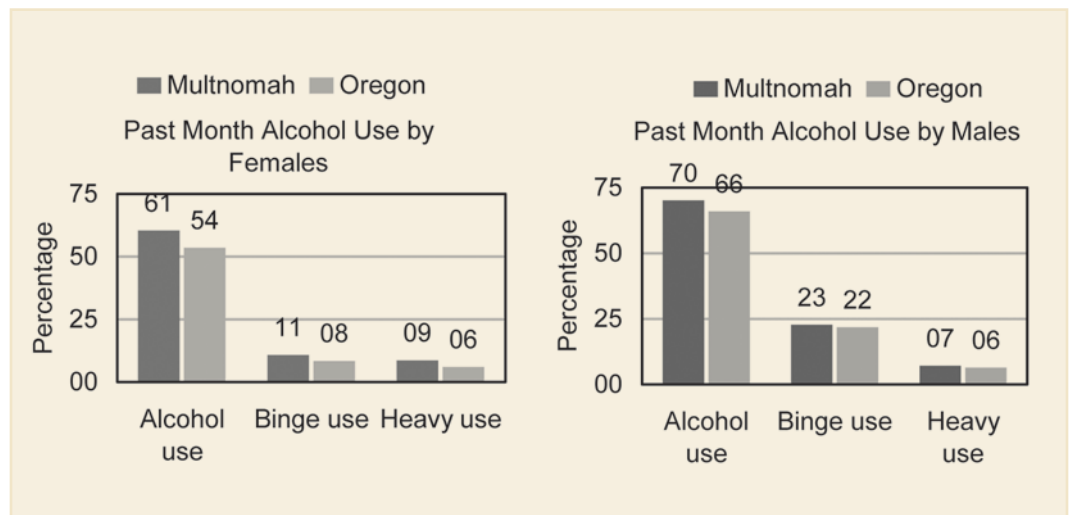
Consuming more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men increases the risk for liver cirrhosis, high blood pressure, stroke, violence, some types of cancer (including breast cancer), suicide, motor vehicle accidents and other injuries.

Each year there are more than 1,000 alcohol-related deaths in Oregon. About one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities involve alcohol, and alcohol-induced diseases are one of the five leading causes of death for Oregon men and women 35 to 64 years old.

- The average life expectancy for women in Oregon is 80 years. On average a woman who dies of alcohol-induced disease dies at 53, a loss of 27 years of life.
- The average life expectancy for Oregon men is 76 years. On average a man who dies of alcohol-induced disease dies at 56, a loss of 20 years of life.

#### One drink is...

- 12 ounces of beer or
- 5 ounces of wine or
- 1.5 ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits



For more information visit these Web sites:

The **Facility Locator** is a national resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that can help if you're looking for a substance abuse treatment provider.  
[dasis3.samhsa.gov](http://dasis3.samhsa.gov)

**WorkDrugFree Oregon** is a statewide business initiative to substantially increase the number of drug-free workplaces.  
[www.workdrugfreeoregon.org](http://www.workdrugfreeoregon.org)

**Statewide contact:**

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*If you need this fact sheet in alternate format, please call 503-945-5763 (Voice) or 503-945-5895 (TTY).  
Addictions and Mental Health Division*

## WHAT INDIVIDUALS CAN DO

More than 200,000 Oregonians are dependent on or abuse alcohol and require treatment. Even more should avoid alcohol because of a medical condition or medications they take.

### Individuals can help by:

- Limiting consumption to no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men,
- Avoiding alcoholic beverages when engaging in activities that require attention, skill or coordination, such as driving or operating machinery, and
- Hosting alcohol-free social events and providing food and nonalcoholic beverages if alcohol is served at social gatherings.

## WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

Alcohol-related problems are caused not only by on-the-job drinking but also by heavy drinking outside of work. Alcohol abuse contributes to absenteeism, arriving late to work or leaving early, doing poor work, doing less work and arguing with coworkers.

### Employers can help by:

Adopting comprehensive drug-free workplace programs, including,

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to assist employees in resolving substance abuse problems and other problems when job performance suffers, and
- Supervisor training to effectively intervene to improve employee performance.

## WHAT COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT CAN DO

Community attitudes about drinking must support moderate alcohol consumption in safe settings. Every day hospital emergency departments, local law enforcement and children's services witness the toll that alcohol consumption takes on our communities.

### Communities and local government can help by:

- Supporting the work of community coalitions to reduce alcohol problems,
- Prohibiting open containers of alcohol in public places, and
- Requiring equal insurance coverage for addiction treatment.

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## DATA SOURCES

*Data about Oregon adults comes from the Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, the Center for Health Statistics, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health and the Fatal Accident Reporting System. Information on the effects of alcohol and prevention strategies was obtained from the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, and Building a Drug-Free Oregon Workforce.*