

Excessive Alcohol Use

According to information published by the CDC's *Excessive Alcohol Use Prevention Team*, excessive alcohol use accounted for approximately 88,000 deaths per year from 2006-2010, and accounted for 1 in 10 of all deaths among working age adults ages 20-64. According to the report, these deaths were due to health effects from drinking too much over time, such as breast cancer, liver disease, and heart disease, and health effects from consuming a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time, such as violence, alcohol poisoning, and motor vehicle crashes. According to the CDC, excessive alcohol use led to 2.5 million years of potential life lost each year and shortened the lives of those who died by about 30 years.

The CDC's report is based on data from the *Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI)* from 2006-2010. The study found that nearly 70% of deaths due to excessive drinking involved working-age adults, and about 70% of the deaths involved males. About 5% of the deaths involved people under the age of 21.

The report quantified excessive drinking to include binge drinking (4 or more drinks on an occasion for women; 5 or more drinks on an occasion for men), heavy drinking (8 or more drinks a week for women, 15 or more drinks a week for men), and any alcohol use by pregnant women or people under the age 21 minimum legal drinking age. According to the report, excessive drinking cost the U.S. about \$224 billion, or \$1.90 per drink, in 2006, and about 40% of these costs were paid by government. Most of these costs were due to lost productivity, including reduced earnings among excessive drinkers as well as deaths due to excessive drinking among working age adults.

CDC's Excessive Alcohol Use Prevention Team makes the following recommendations to help prevent excessive alcohol use:

- States and communities can implement effective prevention strategies for excessive alcohol consumption, such as those recommended by the *Community Preventive Services Task Force*
- Health care providers can use alcohol screening and brief counseling to help people who are drinking too much to drink less
- Adults can set a good example for underage youth by not drinking too much and not providing youth with alcohol
- If you choose to drink, follow the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* on moderate alcohol consumption (no more than one drink per day for women and no more than 2 drinks per day for men).

For more information on this CDC report, please see the full study in *Preventing Chronic Disease*, <http://go.uses.gov/8MHx>

For further information regarding alcohol use in women and during pregnancy, please contact Karen Kuehn Howell, Ph.D., at the Center for Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development, Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 12 Executive Park Drive NE, Atlanta, Georgia, 30329. You can also phone us at 404-712-9829 or visit our website at <http://www.emory.edu/MSACD>

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