

Binge and high-intensity drinking is increasing for U.S. young adults in their late 20s

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Monitoring changes in drinking patterns and amounts helps researchers, prevention professionals, and treatment providers plan for and respond

effectively to personal and public harms associated with alcohol consumption. This information is particularly important for young adults, who tend to drink large amounts of alcohol and are thus at higher risk for negative consequences such as accidents. This study examined historical changes in binge (5+ drinks per occasion) and high-intensity (10+, 15+ drinks per occasion) drinking among U.S. 12th graders and young adults from 2005 to 2015.

In a study funded jointly by the National Institute for Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, researchers examined national longitudinal data from the Monitoring the Future study for 6,711 individuals (3,691 women, 3,020 men), ages 18 to 29/30, for trends in consuming 5+, 10+, and 15+ drinks in a row in the previous two weeks. Results were compared with trends in previous 12-month and 30-day alcohol use for the same age groups.

Between 2005 and 2015, participation in binge and high-intensity drinking was highest for [young adults](#) aged 21/22 to 25/26. Binge and high-intensity drinking generally decreased for individuals in their early 20s, remained stable for individuals in their mid-20s, and increased for individuals in their late 20s. Trends were generally similar for men and women, but increases were observed at earlier ages for women than men. The authors recommend that prevention and intervention efforts address these differences in behavioral trends by age and gender, with a particular focus on the sub-population of 15+ drinkers, which appears to be a uniquely high-risk group, both in the extent of the group's impairment and lack of response to normative drinking policy approaches.

More information: Megan E. Patrick et al. Age-Specific Prevalence of Binge and High-Intensity Drinking Among U.S. Young Adults: Changes from 2005 to 2015, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/acer.13413](https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13413)

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