

Booze robbing many Americans of their sleep

29 November 2020



(HealthDay)—Nearly 7 in 10 Americans have lost sleep because they drank alcohol too close to bedtime, including 1 in 5 who often have this problem, a new poll shows.

In the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) survey, men were more likely to say they've lost sleep due to [drinking](#) alcohol than women (75% vs. 60%), and adults ages 35-44 (78%) are most likely to have a drink too late at night.

"While you might think alcohol helps you sleep, there are [negative effects](#) to having a drink close to bedtime," said AASM President Dr. Kannan Ramar, a sleep medicine physician at the Mayo Clinic.

"Alcohol use can fragment your sleep, leading to more frequent awakenings during the second half of the night," Ramar explained in an AASM news release.

Research shows that having a moderate amount of alcohol an hour before bedtime reduces melatonin production, which can disrupt your internal clock that helps regulate your 24-hour sleep-wake cycle.

Other ways that alcohol can harm your sleep include:

- Causing new sleep disorders or worsening existing ones, including insomnia and obstructive sleep apnea.
- Causing excessive relaxation of the muscles in the head, neck and throat, which may interfere with normal breathing during sleep.
- Causing more frequent trips to the bathroom, especially during the second half of the night.
- Increasing your risk for parasomnias, including sleep walking and sleep eating.
- Alcohol-related sleep disruption can cause next-day fatigue.

Here are some tips on how to avoid alcohol-related [sleep](#) problems:

- Have your last drink three to four hours before [bedtime](#).
- Try to drink two glasses of water for every [alcoholic drink](#). This will help your system flush out the alcohol.
- Don't have bubbly drinks, which can cause bloating and gas.
- Eat a light snack before bed. Food delays how quickly you absorb alcohol, which can help lower your blood [alcohol](#) content.

More information: For more on sleep, go to the [Sleep Foundation](#).

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APA citation: Booze robbing many Americans of their sleep (2020, November 29) retrieved 11 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-booze-americans.html>

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