
Most deaths occur among middle-aged adults.

Atlanta, GA (PRWEB) January 09, 2015 -- More than 2,200 people die from alcohol poisoning each year in the United States – an average of six deaths each day – according to a new Vital Signs report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Three in four alcohol poisoning deaths involve adults ages 35-64 years, and most deaths occur among men and non-Hispanic whites. American Indians/Alaska Natives have the most alcohol poisoning deaths per million people.

Alcohol poisoning deaths are caused by drinking a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time. This can result in very high levels of alcohol in the body, which can shutdown critical areas of the brain that control breathing, heart rate, and body temperature - resulting in death.

More than 38 million U.S. adults report binge drinking an average of four times per month and consume an average of eight drinks per binge. Binge drinking is defined as consuming four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks for men on an occasion. The more you drink, the greater your risk of death.

“Alcohol poisoning deaths are a heartbreaking reminder of the dangers of excessive alcohol use, which is a leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S.” said CDC Principal Deputy Director Ileana Arias, Ph.D. “We need to implement effective programs and policies to prevent binge drinking and the many health and social harms that are related to it, including deaths from alcohol poisoning.”

Alcohol poisoning death rates varied widely across states, from 46.5 deaths per million residents in Alaska to 5.3 per million residents in Alabama. The states with the highest death rates were in the Great Plains, western United States, and New England.

CDC scientists analyzed deaths from alcohol poisoning among people aged 15 years and older, using multiple cause-of-death data from the National Vital Statistics System for 2010-2012.

Alcohol dependence (alcoholism) was identified as a contributing factor in 30 percent of these deaths, and other drugs were noted to have been a factor in about 3 percent of the deaths. While this study reveals that alcohol poisoning deaths are a bigger problem than previously thought, it is still likely to be an underestimate.

“This study shows that alcohol poisoning deaths are not just a problem among young people,” said CDC Alcohol Program Lead and report coauthor Robert Brewer, M.D., M.S.P.H. “It also emphasizes the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to reducing binge drinking that includes evidence-based community strategies, screening and counseling in healthcare settings, and high-quality substance abuse treatment for those who need it.”

Vital Signs is a report that appears each of the month as part of the CDC journal, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The report provides the latest data and information on key health indicators. These are cancer prevention, obesity, tobacco use, motor vehicle passenger safety, prescription drug overdose, HIV/AIDS,
alcohol use, health care-associated infections, cardiovascular health, teen pregnancy, food safety, and viral hepatitis.

Vital Signs is a monthly report that appears as part of the CDC journal, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.
Contact Information
Division of News and Media Relations
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
+1 (404) 639-3286

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