



University of Idaho  
WWAMI Medical Education



# ECHO IDAHO: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN PRIMARY CARE

Alcohol Addiction

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The speaker has no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose.

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# Learning Objectives

- Define Alcohol Use Disorder
- Symptoms of Intoxication/Withdrawal
- Psychiatric and Medical Comorbidities
- Treatment (Pharmacological and Non-pharmacological)

# Definitions

## Definitions

**Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD):** AUD is a chronic relapsing brain disease characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences. AUD can range from mild to severe, and recovery is possible regardless of severity. The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association, described two distinct disorders—alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence—with specific criteria for each. The fifth edition, DSM–5, integrates the two DSM–IV disorders, alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence, into a single disorder called alcohol use disorder, or AUD, with mild, moderate, and severe subclassifications.

### **Binge Drinking:**

- NIAAA defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels to 0.08 g/dL. This typically occurs after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours.<sup>30</sup>
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which conducts the annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), defines binge drinking as 5 or more alcoholic drinks for males or 4 or more alcoholic drinks for females on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past month.<sup>31</sup>

**Heavy Alcohol Use:** SAMHSA defines heavy alcohol use as binge drinking on 5 or more days in the past month.

**Patterns of Drinking Associated with AUD:** Binge drinking and heavy alcohol use can increase an individual's risk of AUD. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that if alcohol is consumed, it should be in moderation, defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age. Some individuals should avoid alcohol completely.

**Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Fatality:** A fatality in a crash involving a driver or motorcycle rider (operator) with a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or greater.

**Disability-Adjusted Life-Years (DALYs):** A measure of years of life lost or lived in less than full health.

**Underage Drinking:** Alcohol use by anyone under the age of 21. In the United States, the legal drinking age is 21.

# Alcohol Use Disorder

## DSM-5 Criteria

- A. A problematic pattern of alcohol use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by at least 2 of the following, occurring within a 12 month period:
1. Alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
  2. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful effort to cut down or control alcohol use.
  3. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects.
  4. Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol.
  5. Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.
  6. Continued alcohol use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of alcohol.
  7. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of alcohol use.
  8. Recurrent alcohol use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.
  9. Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.
  10. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
    - A need for markedly increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication or desired effect.
    - A markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.
  11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
    - The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for alcohol.
    - Alcohol (or a closely related substance, such as a benzodiazepine) is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.

# Prevalence in U.S.

- **Adults (ages 18+):** According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 14.4 million adults ages 18 and older (5.8 percent of this age group) had AUD. This includes 9.2 million men (7.6 percent of men in this age group) and 5.3 million women (4.1 percent of women in this age group).
  - About 7.9 percent of adults who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 8.0 percent of males and 7.7 percent of females with AUD in this age group.
- **Youth ages 12 to 17:** According to the 2018 NSDUH, an estimated 401,000 adolescents ages 12–17 (1.6 percent of this age group) had AUD. This number includes 173,000 males (1.4 percent of males in this age group) and 227,000 females (1.9 percent of females in this age group).
  - About 5.0 percent of youth who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 5.6 percent of males and 4.6 percent of females with AUD in this age group.

# Intoxication/Withdrawal

- Intoxication
  - Risks
  - Presentation
- Withdrawal
  - Risks
  - Presentation

# Screening Tools

- CAGE Screener

**C** Have you ever felt you should *cut down* on your drinking?

**A** Have people *annoyed* you by criticizing your drinking?

**G** Have you ever felt bad or *guilty* about your drinking?

**E** *Eye opener*: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

The CAGE can identify alcohol problems over the lifetime. Two positive responses are considered a positive test and indicate further assessment is warranted.

- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/audit.pdf>

- T-Ace

**T** *Tolerance*: How many drinks does it take to make you feel high?

**A** Have people *annoyed* you by criticizing your drinking?

**C** Have you ever felt you ought to *cut down* on your drinking?

**E** *Eye opener*: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

The T-ACE, which is based on the CAGE, is valuable for identifying a range of use, including lifetime use and prenatal use, based on the DSM-III-R criteria. A score of 2 or more is considered positive. Affirmative answers to questions A, C, or E = 1 point each.

Reporting tolerance to more than two drinks (the T question) = 2 points.

# Comorbidities

## Psychiatric

- Bipolar Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Antisocial Personality Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Depressive Disorders

## Medical

- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Hepatitis
- Gastritis
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Pancreatitis
- Epilepsy
- Mouth cancer
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Stroke
- Ovarian cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Breast cancer
- Anemia
- Dementia
- Seizures
- Gout
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- [Restless leg syndrome](#)
- Anxiety

# Treatment

- Risk of Suicide
- Benzodiazepines not “first-line” with SUD
- SSRIs
- Gabapentin
- Medications to help reduce cravings
  - Naltrexone (Vivitrol)
  - Disulfiram (Antabuse)
- Nonpharmacologic Interventions
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
  - 12 Step Model (AA or NA)

# References

- <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>
- DSM-5
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2851027/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/audit.pdf>
- <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa65/aa65.htm>

ECHO Idaho: Behavioral Health in Primary Care

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# Ongoing Resource List

**RESOURCES FROM TODAY'S SESSION AND PAST SESSIONS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR ONGOING RESOURCE LIST.**

<https://iecho.unm.edu/sites/uidaho/download.hns?i=85>