

FAST FACTS**Prevalence & Impact of Hazardous & Harmful (At-Risk) Drinking**

- 30% of Americans are at-risk drinkers & 4-5% meet diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence.^{1,2,3,4}
- Third leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.: 85,000 deaths per year, representing 5% of all deaths.^{1,5}
- High morbidity & mortality related to injuries, liver disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, motor vehicle crashes, suicide, and homicide.^{5,6}
- Estimated economic cost = \$185 billion. This exceeds the cost of drug abuse (\$100 billion), cancer (\$107 billion) or coronary heart disease (\$96 billion).^{1,7,8}

Efficacy of Brief Interventions

- 19 clinical trials between 1983 and 2001 found that brief interventions by primary care clinicians reduce alcohol consumption among hazardous and harmful drinkers by an average of 34%.⁹
- Follow-up of patients receiving brief interventions in Wisconsin found continued reductions in drinking for 48 months,¹⁰ as well as reductions in hospitalizations, reductions in emergency room visits, and net cost savings per intervention of \$546 in medical costs and \$7,780 in related social costs
- US Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening and brief intervention for hazardous and harmful alcohol use for all primary care patients age 18 and over.¹¹
 - Evidence for effectiveness is high (B rating)
 - Same rating as cholesterol screening & flu vaccine for the elderly
- Patient acceptance rates for routine alcohol screening procedures are high.¹²
- Single question screening can identify more than 80% of hazardous and harmful drinkers.¹³

The Importance of Clinician Training

- Less than half of self-reported problem drinkers are asked by their primary care physicians about their alcohol consumption or advised to quit drinking or cut back.⁷
- Training increases clinician confidence and self-efficacy in performing brief intervention and increases rates of brief intervention.^{14,15}
- Trained clinicians typically intervene with more than 70% of patients.^{16,17}
- Effective models exist for implementing screening and brief intervention in residency training.^{18,19,20}

The Importance of Nursing Personnel Involvement

- Clinicians were 12 times more likely to intervene if nurses screened for at risk drinking as part of the vital signs.²¹
- Clinicians were three times more likely to intervene with at risk drinkers if given alcohol assessment results by the nurse.¹⁷



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FAST FACT REFERENCES

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