

Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking in Iowa

As the most commonly used substance, alcohol use continues to be a concern both in Iowa and across the United States. One pattern of alcohol use which is concerning among both adults and youth is binge drinking. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a blood concentration of 0.08g/dl and above (NIAAA, 2004). For most adults, this blood alcohol concentration occurs after consuming five drinks or more for males and four drinks or more for females in about two hours.

A drink may look different depending on the type of alcohol being consumed. In general, a drink is defined as one-half-ounce of alcohol or the amount present in a 12-ounce beer, 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5-ounce shot of liquor.

Definition of Binge Drinking:

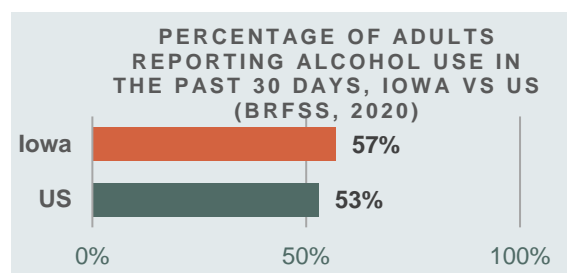
5 or more drinks for males
4 or more drinks for females
Consumed in 2 hours or less

What is a standard drink?

12 fl oz beer
5 fl oz wine
1.5 fl oz shot



Adults Reporting Alcohol Use in the Past 30 Days



In 2020, 57% of Iowa adults reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days, greater than the 53% of adults reporting alcohol use in the past 30 days across all 50 states and the District of Columbia (BRFSS, 2020).

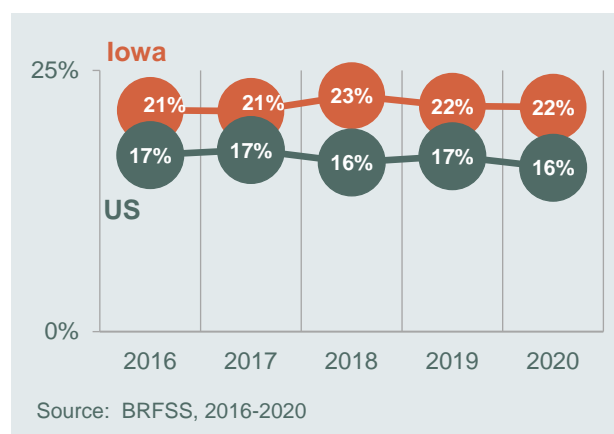
In Iowa, alcohol use in the past 30 days has decreased slightly from 61% in 2011 to 57% in 2020.

Binge Drinking Among Adults in the Past 30 Days

The prevalence of binge drinking in the past 30 days among Iowa adults was 22% in 2020, greater than the 16% of US adults reporting binge drinking in the past 30 days (BRFSS, 2020).

Binge drinking was higher in Iowa compared to the US national average

Over the past 5 years, approximately one in five (22%) adult Iowans reported binge drinking in the past month.



The prevalence of binge drinking was higher among males (28%) compared to females (15%; Table 1).

Binge drinking decreased with age with one-third (33%) of those 18-24 years of age reporting the highest proportion of binge drinking.

Almost one-quarter (24%) of Iowans with some post-high school education reported binge drinking followed by 22% among those with a HS diploma or GED, 20% with a college degree, and 13% with less than a HS education.

Binge drinking is highest among Iowans who are White, non-Hispanic (22%), followed by Hispanic (20%) and Black, non-Hispanic (16%).

Table 1. Prevalence of Binge Drinking in the Past 30 Days among Adult Iowans (BRFSS, 2020)

	2020		2020
Gender		Smoking status	
Male	28%	Current smokers	34%
Female	15%	Former and never smokers	19%
Age		Employment	
18-24	33%	Employed for Wages	29%
25-44	31%	Student	27%
45-64	20%	Self-employed	24%
65+	5%	Out of work for less than 1 year	23%
Relationship Status		Out of work for 1 year or more	19%
Never married	31%	Homemaker	9%
Partnered (married or unmarried)	20%	Unable to work	9%
Divorced, widowed, or separated	15%	Retired	1%
Education		Last Routine Medical Checkup	
Less than HS graduate	13%	Never	23%
HS graduate or GED	22%	5 or more years ago	33%
Some Post-HS education	24%	Within the past 5 years (2-5 years ago)	30%
College graduate	20%	Within past 2 years (1-2 years ago)	29%
Race		Within past year	19%
White, Non-Hispanic	22%	Poor Mental Health Days in the Past Month	
Hispanic	20%	14+ poor mental health days	26%
Black, Non-Hispanic	16%	1-13 poor mental health days	25%
Another race	14%	No days when mental health not good	19%

Table 1 presents rates of binge drinking among Iowans by demographic characteristic (BRFSS, 2020)

Among adult Iowans, the highest proportion of binge drinking is reported among adults who ...

- ...currently smoke (34%),*
- ...are aged 18-24y (33%) or 25-44y (31%),*
- ...have not had a recent medical checkup,*
- ...have never been married (31%),*
- ...are employed for wages (29%), or*
- ...are male (28%).*

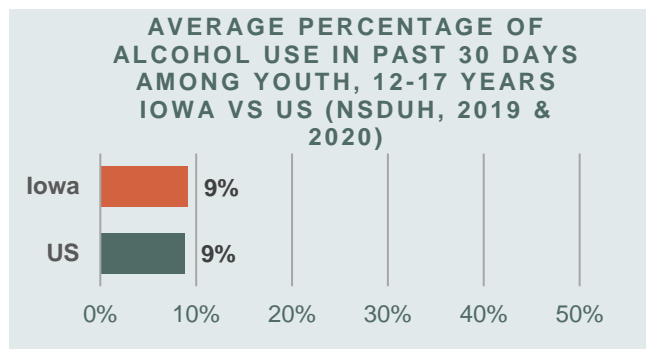
By employment status, the prevalence of binge drinking was highest among adults employed for wages (29%), then adults who reported being a student (27%), followed by those who were self-employed (24%).

Binge drinking was highest among Iowans who had never been married (31%) compared to those who were partnered (married or unmarried; 20%) or had been divorced, widowed, or separated (15%).

One-third (34%) of current smokers reported binge drinking compared to 19% of former or never smokers.

One-quarter of Iowans reporting one or more days in the past month with poor mental health reported higher prevalence of binge drinking (26%) than those reporting no days of poor mental health (19%).

Youth Reporting Alcohol Use in Past 30 Days



In 2019 & 2020, 9% of youth aged 12 to 17 years in Iowa and nationwide reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days (NSDUH, 2020).

Among Iowa youth in 6th, 8th, and 11th grades, 8% reported alcohol use in the past month (IYS, 2021).

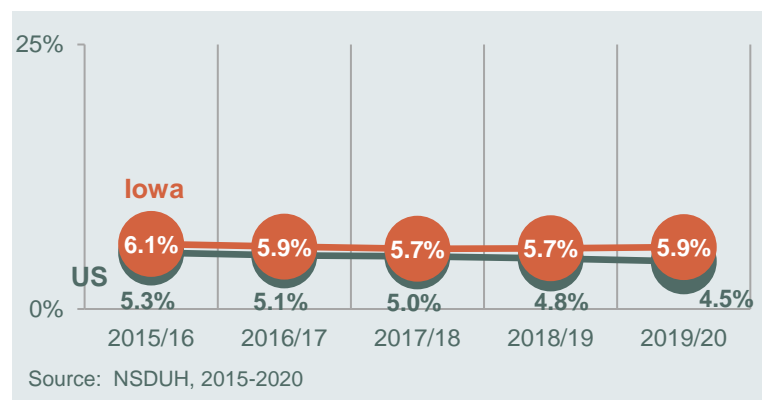
Alcohol use in the past month increased by grade: 2% of 6th graders compared to 6% of 8th graders and 18% of 11th graders (IYS, 2021).

Binge Drinking Among Youth Past 30 Days

Among Iowa youth aged 12 to 17, 5.9% reported binge drinking in the past 30 days compared to 4.5% of US youth during the same time period (NSDUH, 2020).

Among youth, binge drinking has stayed the same, but Iowa youth still report higher prevalence than national estimates across all years

From 2015/16 to 2019/20, approximately 6% of Iowa youth aged 12-17 years reported binge drinking in the past month compared with 5% of US youth.



In 2021, 3% of male and 4% of female youth in Iowa reported binge drinking (IYS, 2021).

Reported binge drinking increased with age with <1% of 6th graders and 2% of 8th graders reporting binge drinking compared to 9% of 11th graders in Iowa (IYS, 2021).

Personal and Financial Costs of Binge Drinking

In 2020, there were 836 alcohol-related deaths in Iowa. The alcohol-related death rate was comparable between urban (27.1 deaths per 100K population) and rural locations (26.4 deaths per 100K population), but higher among males (36.7 deaths per 100K males) compared to females (17.1 deaths per 100K females) (IDPH, 2020).



In Iowa, the estimated cost from excessive drinking in 2010 was **\$1.9 billion** which includes costs from losses in work productivity, health care, and criminal justice, among others (CDC, 2019).

Reducing Binge Drinking in Iowa

The Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse offers services to prevent and reduce binge drinking. These services include:

- Funding substance abuse prevention agencies that provide alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention across all 99 Iowa counties;
- Identifying specific counties that have higher rates of underage drinking and binge drinking and then funding these counties to utilize environmental prevention strategies across the lifespan;
- Funding community coalitions to address underage drinking and binge drinking;
- Supporting counties to provide services focused on prevention education, referral, intervention or post-treatment;
- Providing grants for youth programs focused on leadership, education and mentoring services that reduce risks associated with drinking.

For more prevention and treatment resources in Iowa, please visit the IDPH Substance Abuse Prevention website

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Bureau-of-Substance-Abuse/Prevention-Related-Programs>, or
YourLifelowa.org

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