**It’s the Binge that Makes Me Cringe.**

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**THE PROBLEM**

Have you found yourself losing sleep? Gaining weight? Having increased anxiety? This might be caused by how often and the amount of alcohol you drink.

For men, [binge drinking](https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm) happens when they consume 5 or more drinks. For women, it occurs when they consume 4 or more drinks in 2 hours.

**THE WHY**

For students, the weekend is a fun time to enjoy a break from the demands of school. Some participate in harmless activities during this time, while others will indulge in binge drinking.

People often drink for sports events, social purposes, or simply for parties. This behavior is amplified in college because of newfound freedom for individuals.

It can be hard when you feel peer pressured in a social setting to say no to drinking. Deep down, you may not want to engage in this behavior, but in order to “fit in” this can be a hard feeling to ignore.

As PhD, author of *Why We Resist* Kathleen Starr exhibits, the concept of [self is a social phenomenon](https://read.amazon.com/?asin=B07ZZLSTWF). It reiterates this understanding of why we use social norms to judge our abilities, weaknesses, and risks. When people around you are engaging, you naturally want to join.

**DANGERS**

Understanding your college’s social environment and planning your day-to-day life can help monitor drinking habits.

A health communication study from Elon University showed a significant statistic. 75% out of 8 subjects believe that they will make a conscious effort to stop binge drinking after college.

Right now, they are not concerned with the short-term effects. Although students know the consequences, they still engage in this behavior because they don't see a reason to change.

Long-term effects are unforeseeable and it is just a part of the “college experience” for them. This mentality can be extremely dangerous when roughly 20% of college students meet the criteria for having an [alcohol use disorder](https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/understanding-alcohol-use-disorder).

The risks might outweigh the benefits as approximately 2,000 college students between ages 18-24 die from alcohol-related injuries each year according to [research](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/resources/college-alcohol-abuse/). So how can you avoid becoming a part of this statistic?

**BE MINDFUL**

There are many possible solutions to reduce this behavior and avoid over drinking. Some of these solutions include:

1. Monitoring your alcohol intake with a measuring cup
2. Drinking water before and after consuming each drink
3. Ensuring you have eaten enough food to absorb the alcohol
4. Surrounding yourself with people who drink less
5. Giving yourself permission to leave a party when you are uncomfortable
6. Asking yourself if it is worth it

Regardless of your social setting, it is important to be mindful about your actions. Remind yourself that you aren't going to lose friends if you stay sober.

If the dangers of binge drinking are understood, drinking can happen more safely in a college setting. Shift your mindset, be less dependent on alcohol, find healthy alternatives that fulfill your college goals.

Challenge the status quo by putting your health first.