

Frequent Binge-Drinking Behaviors

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is a statewide coalition of 21 public and private colleges and universities in Missouri with the mission of building safe and healthy campuses. PIP tracks efforts to reduce high-risk behaviors with trend data gathered through the annual implementation of the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) survey. Binge-drinking is a problematic behavior occurring on every Missouri college campus. By examining student binge-drinking rates and negative consequences associated with binge-drinking, campuses across the state can continue to develop policies and programs that will promote the safety and wellbeing of college students.

National and Statewide Binge-Drinking Rates

Binge-drinking (defined as consuming 5+ drinks over a 2-hour period) has continued to be a hazardous behavior among college students aged 18-24 in the United States¹. The consequences of binge-drinking are widespread; ranging from receiving lower grades and missing class to assault, motor-vehicle accidents, injury, and death. When assessed nationally, approximately 32% of college students reported binge-drinking over the past 2 weeks². When compared with the 2017 Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) results, around 27% of Missouri college students indicated binge-drinking over the past 2 weeks. Although this number is lower than the national average, the Missouri college student binge-drinking rate has increased since 2015. For instance, in 2015 the rate was 24%, with a slight increase to 25% in 2016, and 27% in 2017.

Binge-drinking:

Consuming
5+ drinks
 over a two
 hour period

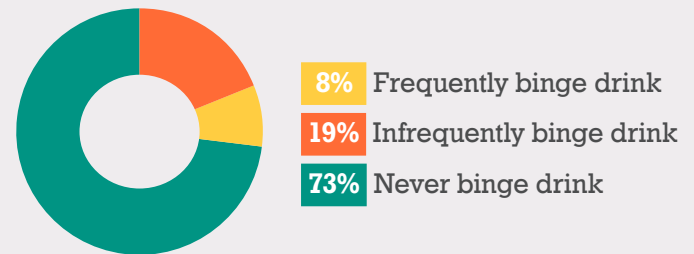
Frequent binge-drinking:

Binge-drinking
3+ times
 over the past
 two weeks

Frequent Binge-Drinking Rates

Though frequent binge-drinking drinking can be defined in varying ways, this brief will utilize the following definition: 'binge-drinking 3+ times over the

Binge Drinking Rates



past two weeks³. According to the 2017 MACHB, approximately 8% of all Missouri college students surveyed statewide reported in engaging in frequent binge drinking behavior. However, the MACHB data also indicates that of the nearly one-quarter of Missouri college students who binge drink, 1/3 of those students are engaging in frequent binge drinking behaviors. In simpler terms, 1 out of 3 students who binge drink, binge drink 3 or more times in a two week period.

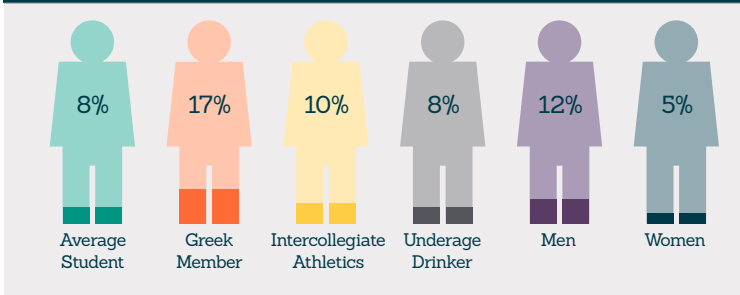
Frequent Binge-Drinking Subpopulations

When assessing subpopulations, certain groups have a higher likeliness of partaking in frequent binge-drinking. For instance, students' in particular academic majors have higher incidences of frequent binge-drinking: the highest ranking being interdisciplinary studies (18%), business (14%), agriculture (12%), liberal arts/humanities (8%), and journalism (8%). Other populations that demonstrate higher incidences of frequent binge-drinking are Greek members (17%), intercollegiate/varsity athletes (10%), and individuals under the age of

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21 (8%). There also appears to be gender differences in regards to heavy drinking*. Students that identify as males tend to drink at higher rates than females (12% and 5%, respectively). Finally, year-in-school seems to play a factor in how often college students engage in frequent binge-drinking. The MACHB shows that sophomores (9%) and seniors (10%) have the highest levels of frequent binge-drinking behaviors. Although the precise reasoning for high-risk drinking behaviors cannot be generalized to all college students, the MACHB shows that 'to relax', 'to have fun with friends', 'to get drunk', 'I like the taste', and 'I like how it feels' to be top indicators.

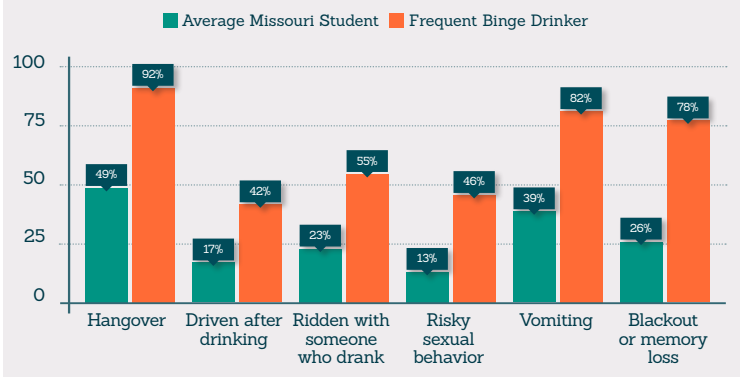
Frequent Binge Drinking Rates Among Subpopulations of Students



Negative Consequences

The MACHB assesses for negative consequences associated with alcohol use within the past year. When focusing on frequent binge-drinkers, negative consequences consistently ranked higher than the average Missouri college student. For instance, 92% of frequent binge-drinkers have experienced a hangover in the past year, 42% have driven after

Negative Consequences experienced by Average Missouri College Students vs. Frequent Binge Drinkers



consuming alcohol, 55% rode with someone who had been drinking, 82% have vomited from intoxication, 46% engaged in risky sexual behavior, and 78% experienced a blackout or memory loss from drinking. When viewing the Average Missouri Student vs. Frequent Binge Drinker Negative Consequences table, the differences between a typical Missouri college student and a frequent binge-drinker are drastic.

Prevention Strategies

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, nine out of 10 people whom are considered heavy drinkers are not considered to have a substance use disorder⁴. This may indicate that the task of lowering the binge-drinking rate is more solvable than initially realized. A combination of education for those students who are abusing alcohol the most dangerously and stricter enforcement of alcohol policies and laws on and off campus may help curb binge and frequent binge drinking rates.

Across Missouri, campuses are utilizing numerous environmental strategies to reduce incidences of high-risk drinking. For instance, several campuses are working with their local community to restrict drink specials, enforce the age-21 drinking age, increase alcohol tax, and mandate students to complete a brief in-person or online intervention tutorial (e.g., BASICS, eCHECKUP, or Alcohol Edu)⁵. Campuses can learn more about prevention strategies to address frequent binge drinking by consulting the NIAAA's Alcohol Intervention Matrix found at <http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov>.

*The MACHB allows students to identify gender with the following responses; male, female, transgender, gender queer, self-identify, and prefer not to respond. However, this brief focuses primarily on the experiences of identifying males and females because the small sample size of other responses is not statistically significant.

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References

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