

# CDC: Binge drinking is serious problem for girls, women

Cathy Payne, USA TODAY 2:45p.m. EST January 8, 2013

**Binge drinking puts women and girls at increased risk for health problems.**



(Photo: Eric Risberg, AP)

## Story Highlights

- 1 in 8 women report binge drinking
- Binge drinking affects females differently than males
- Related health problems include breast cancer, STDs

Binge drinking among women and girls is a health problem that is serious but under-recognized, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) says in a report out today.

About 1 in 8 women and 1 in 5 high school girls binge drink, according to the CDC's Vital Signs report. [Binge drinking](#) for women is defined as consuming four or more alcohol drinks, such as beer, liquor or wine, on an occasion.

The study found that binge drinking was most common among women ages 18-34 and high school girls. It also was most prevalent among women living in households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or higher.

The report notes special concerns about binge drinking among females. Women and girls metabolize, or process, alcohol differently from men and boys.

The CDC warns binge drinking puts women at a higher risk for breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease and unintended pregnancy. Binge drinking during pregnancy can lead to fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and sudden infant death syndrome.

David Jernigan, director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, says it is critical that this problem of binge drinking is highlighted.

"We've watched a shift from girls drinking beer to distilled spirits," he says. "They are experimenting with the strongest form of the drug available."

CDC Director Thomas Frieden says there are ways to prevent excessive drinking. "Effective community measures can support women and girls in making wise choices about whether to drink or how much to drink if they do," he says. "Each of us can choose not to binge drink."