

Press Release

April 1, 2021

Press Contact

Kim Zambole

communications@prevention.org

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. This public health program is an opportunity to increase the outreach and education regarding the impact of alcohol misuse and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). A significant part of the work is to point out the stigma that surrounds AUD and even Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in general. Organized by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), affiliate organizations launch campaigns in communities using social and traditional media to help bring awareness to causes and effects of AUD and how to find treatment options.

According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, alcohol is the most frequent substance used by teens in Illinois. While youth alcohol use in Illinois is declining (since 2008), it is still higher than national trends across all grades surveyed (8th, 10th, and 12th). According to the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 414,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17 had an alcohol use disorder. Important influencers for teens include parents who can help by setting rules and educating teens on the facts about underage alcohol use.

Alcohol misuse is public health concern in the United States. This year it is more important than ever to increase the awareness of the impact of alcohol misuse. Research shows that alcohol use in the United States is a public health problem that has worsened since the onset of COVID-19. History tells us that the stress of disasters and anxiety about the future can increase drinking and exacerbate symptoms of alcohol use disorder. Alcohol misuse interferes with the body's immune response to viral and bacterial infections. An impaired immune system contributes to a more severe COVID-19 and greater risk of mortality.

According to the [SAFE Project](#), some helpful strategies to stress that don't include alcohol include:

- **Reach out to your support system.** Social distancing doesn't mean social isolation, reach out to your family and friends. They may be able to offer advice or share how they're coping.
- **Attend virtual recovery meetings.** [InTheRooms.com](#) hosts online meetings through a social support community.
- **Practice self-care.** Staying physically and psychologically healthy with a healthy diet, plenty of sleep, and exercise are great ways to reduce stress.

Additional resources are listed below.

SPRINGFIELD

2800 Montvale Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62704

prevention.org
p: 217.793.7353 / 800.252.8951
f: 217.793.7354

CHICAGO

33 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 300
Chicago Illinois 60654

prevention.org
p: 312.988.4646 / 800.252.8951
f: 312.988.7096

Resources:

[Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances](#) at 833-234-6343, text HELP to 833234

[Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol & Your Health](#)

Rethinking Drinking website and booklet is designed for U.S. adults who drink alcohol. It provides evidence-based information along with support for making a change if needed.

[How Has Drinking Behavior Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic?](#)

Barbosa, C., et al. Research Triangle Institute International, 2020

[Youth Alcohol Use in Illinois](#), Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2019)

For more resources Alcohol Awareness Month, visit [Prevention First](#) for underage drinking prevention resources and the [Alcohol Policy Resource Center](#) for education, resources, and tools on evidence-based alcohol policy strategies. Prevention First is funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.