

ALCOHOL USE IN MONTANA

Key Points:

- The number of Montanans dying from alcohol-related diseases and poisonings has almost doubled over the past decade. From 2009 to 2013 there were **1,563** alcohol-related deaths in Montana; from 2019-2023 there were **2,941** alcohol-related deaths.¹
- Alcohol-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits have been on the rise over the past five years. In 2023 alone, over **\$222 million** was charged by Montana hospitals for **16,914** alcohol-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits.^{1,2}
- Among Montanans receiving treatment for substance use disorders in 2024, **66.7%** reported alcohol as their primary substance of misuse, and an additional **8.4%** reported it as their secondary substance of misuse.³
- In 2023, **13.6%** of all arrests made by law enforcement agencies in Montana were alcohol-related DUIs, with **3,997** DUI arrests.⁴
- More than **one-fifth** of college students in Montana reported driving under the influence of alcohol within the past three months.⁵ Almost **6%** of high school students reported driving under the influence of alcohol and **16.8%** reported riding in a vehicle with someone else driving under the influence of alcohol within the past 30 days.⁶

	United States	Montana
Percent of high school students who report drinking alcohol within the past 30 days ⁷	22.1%	26.2%
Percent of high school students who report binge drinking alcohol within the past 30 days ⁷	8.8%	13.4%
Percent of adults aged 18+ who report drinking alcohol in the past month ⁸	52.8%	59.1%
Percent of adults (ages 18+) who report binge drinking in the past month ⁸	15.2%	19.5%
Percent of fatal crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver (BAC 0.08+). ⁹	31.8%	33.3%

Key Terms:

Binge drinking is consuming four or more drinks at a time for a female, or five or more drinks at a time for a male.

Alcohol-related deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits include alcohol abuse, alcoholic liver disease, alcohol-induced pancreatitis, alcohol poisoning, and injuries incurred after consumption of alcohol.

References:

1. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. (2024). Injury and Overdose Indicators Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/EMSTS/InjuryandOverdoseIndicators>
2. Montana Hospital Discharge Data System. (2023). Office of Epidemiology and Scientific Support, Public Health and Safety Division. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Data provided courtesy of participating MHA members.
3. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. (2024). Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Division. Treatment and Episode Data Set.
4. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2023). FBI Crime Data Explorer. Retrieved from <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/arrest>
5. American College Health Association. (2023). National College Health Assessment: Montana Consortium Reference Group.
6. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. (2024). Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Division. Montana Prevention Needs Assessment. Retrieved from <https://montana.pridesurveys.com/#reports>
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023. Retrieved from <https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/>
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/index.html>
9. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2024). Fatality Analysis Reporting System. Traffic Safety Facts, Montana: 2018-2022.