



## Continuing the conversation... Alcohol in Ottawa

Why talk about alcohol?  
How much are we drinking?  
How often do we drink?

- What are the effects of alcohol:
- Acute and chronic health effects?
    - Second-hand effects?
  - Financial and social costs?

Do we need a change?  
What does the change look like?  
How do we move towards a culture of moderation?

Who should be involved?  
How can I make a difference?

### What shapes alcohol problems in our community?<sup>1</sup>

#### Media

Advertising and other media messages shape how alcohol is perceived; it can be a positive or negative influence depending upon what is being shared.

#### Community Norms

Social expectations and acceptance influences drinking patterns; this is true for heavy drinking, binge drinking and other alcohol related problems.

#### Access to alcohol

The number of locations where alcohol is available i.e. licensed bars/ restaurants, stores including hours and days of sale shape alcohol use and potential problems.

#### Policy Enforcement

Enforcing public and private policies shape how alcohol is promoted, sold and consumed within a community.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Marin Institute "What shapes alcohol problems in your community" Infographic

# Alcohol Use in Ottawa

## How much are we drinking?

83% of adults (19+) drink alcohol (595,000)

54% of grade 12 students binge drink <sup>2</sup>

44% of young adults (19-24) binge drink <sup>3</sup>

22% of adults (19+) exceed weekly Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines <sup>4</sup>

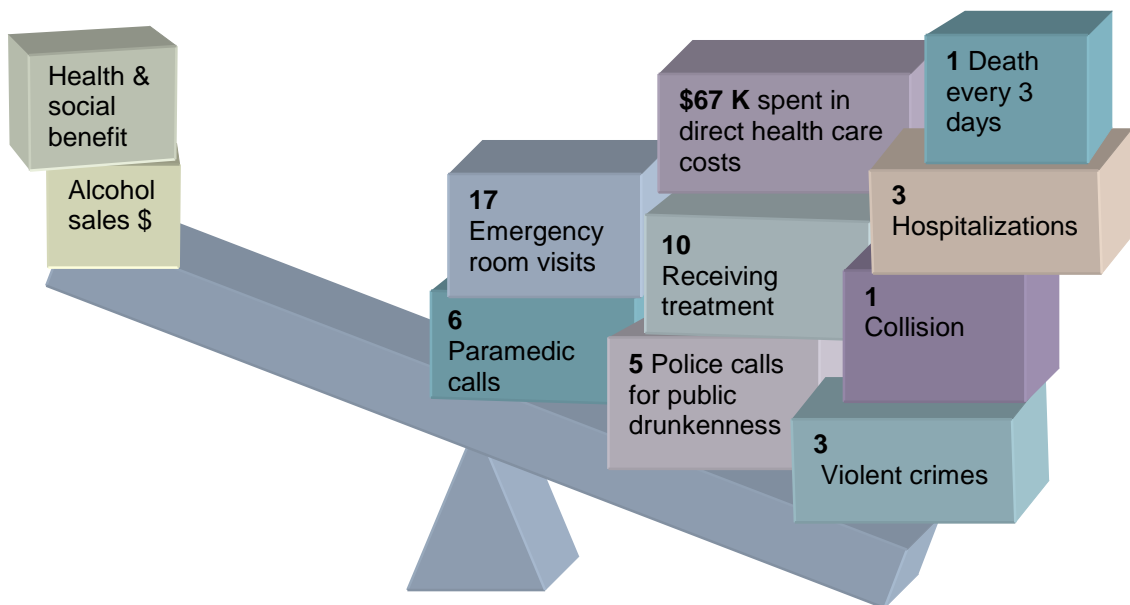
## What are people saying?

*"I enjoy going out for drinks with friends. Sometimes it's one or two, sometimes it's a party. We've always been safe about where we are drinking and not driving and I think that just comes down to awareness and keeping an eye out for each other."*  
(Respondent aged 19 to 24 years old)

*"I have seen families torn apart by alcohol misuse, have experienced the stressed filled trip to emergency department with a daughter who drank a whole mickey herself- thinking drinking made for a great time with friends; have lost people I love to drinking and driving..."* (Respondent aged 45 years and older)

*"I have lost family members from alcohol and drug use and abuse. I have witnessed spousal violence due to substance use. The long-term effects last for generations. It can absolutely begin by innocent drinking in youth. When it does, it is extremely difficult to get out of that habit and stunts growth."*  
(Respondent aged 25 to 44 years old)

## Ottawa's daily alcohol costs: Second-hand effects by the numbers



For details [Status of Alcohol in Ottawa: Let's Continue the Conversation 2016 report](https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/state_of_alcohol_2016_en.pdf)  
[https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/state\\_of\\_alcohol\\_2016\\_en.pdf](https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/state_of_alcohol_2016_en.pdf)

## Reducing alcohol problems in our community

Everyone has a role to play to change the drinking culture in Ottawa including decision makers. Together we can create a more positive and low risk drinking community. Some examples <sup>5</sup> for individuals, school, or local leaders are:

### Individuals in the community

- ☑ **Find out what others are saying** about alcohol in Ottawa, join the conversation.
- ☑ **Read and share** the Status of Alcohol in Ottawa: Let's Continue the Conversation 2016 report.
- ☑ **Check your own drinking practices** by taking the anonymous survey at [Ottawa.ca/checkyourdrinking](http://Ottawa.ca/checkyourdrinking).
- ☑ **Find out how to lower your health risk.** Check out [Canada's low risk alcohol drinking guidelines](http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/2012-Canada-Low-Risk-Alcohol-Drinking-Guidelines-Brochure-en.pdf) and share with friends, family, colleagues and clients.  
<http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/2012-Canada-Low-Risk-Alcohol-Drinking-Guidelines-Brochure-en.pdf>.
- ☑ **Talk to your councillor about alcohol in Ottawa. Support and participate in family friendly, alcohol free events.**
- ☑ **Model low risk alcohol consumption and talk to your children/youth about alcohol.** Find information at [Ottawa.ca/parenting](http://Ottawa.ca/parenting) in Ottawa.
- ☑ **Act as a role model for your peers** and demonstrate low risk drinking.

### Post-Secondary Institutions / School Boards

- ☑ **Support campus/community partnerships** to reduce binge drinking.
- ☑ **Create or review alcohol policies** to strengthen, promote and enforce policies including alcohol policies within student residences.
- ☑ **Advocate for stricter alcohol advertising regulations.** Increase media awareness on alcohol advertising.
- ☑ **Seek out leadership opportunities** to raise awareness about alcohol.
- ☑ **Speak out against alcohol marketing and promotion** targeting youth and young adults.

## Leaders

- ☑ **Enforced liquor laws** in the community and around licensed establishments reduces problems.
- ☑ **Speak up to support partnerships to reduce binge drinking.** Community leaders can support public health and safety of all residents.
- ☑ **Monitor and report alcohol promotion and pricing that encourages binge drinking** including cheap drinks special or targeted drink promotion e.g. ladies night.
- ☑ **Promote data collection, monitoring of alcohol use and related harms.** Information builds the case to support community programming.
- ☑ **Promote or renew workplace alcohol policies.** Example: [workplace alcohol policies](http://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/documents/sp_substance_misuse_en.pdf).  
[http://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/documents/sp\\_substance\\_misuse\\_en.pdf](http://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents.ottawa.ca/files/documents/sp_substance_misuse_en.pdf)

## Municipal Governments

- ☑ **Support and work with** community and public health partners.
- ☑ **Renew Municipal Alcohol Policy** to strengthen, promote or enforce existing policy.
- ☑ **Encourage Safer Bar Policies** to reduce violence and alcohol related problems in licensed establishments and bars.

## Health Organizations

- ☑ **Support and enable collection and monitoring** of alcohol data to track harms. Promote [Check your drinking tool](#). Tool found at [Ottawa.ca/checkyourdrinking](http://Ottawa.ca/checkyourdrinking).
- ☑ **Promote Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral (SBIR)** for screening and timely access to services required. <http://www.sbir-diba.ca/>

## For More Information

### Contact the Ottawa Public Health Information Line:

Phone: 613-580-6744 | Email: [healthsante@ottawa.ca](mailto:healthsante@ottawa.ca) | Web: [OttawaPublicHealth.ca](http://OttawaPublicHealth.ca)

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey defines binge drinking as having 5 or more on same occasion in past four weeks

<sup>3</sup> Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines defines binge drinking for adults as 4 or more for women and 5 for men on one occasion in past year.

<sup>4</sup> Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines defines weekly limits as 15 drinks for men and 10 drinks for women

<sup>5</sup> Adapted with permission from Kingston Frontenac Lennox and Addington Health Unit

