

# the **RED CUP**

**Q&A**



**separating alcohol fact from fiction**  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## **Q** What is the long-term side effect of casual binge drinking?

**A.** We'll get to your use of the word "casual" soon enough. The question we believe you are really asking is "are there serious consequences for bingeing frequently over time versus bingeing occasionally?"

Bingeing is typically defined as 5 or more drinks for males and 4 or more drinks for females consumed within a 2 hour period.

Significant social and health outcomes from bingeing over time may include lost productivity, compromise of academic and relationship success, psychiatric problems, chronic cardiac and liver diseases, increased risk of cancers of the mouth, esophagus, colon and breast, GI problems, neurological conditions, fetal alcohol syndrome, etc.

So, getting back to "casual" binge drinking... yes, you can binge infrequently. However, because you are consuming larger amounts of alcohol over a short amount of time, it is never without risk. To "casually" binge drink is an oxymoron as the drinking style of bingeing always increases the possibility of negative consequences. Therefore, there is nothing "casual" about bingeing, even infrequently. The erotic equivalent would be to ask the question, is casual unprotected sex still risky? We can hear the collective, "Duh!"

Immediate social and health consequences of bingeing might include violence, drama, drunk-texting, regrets, blackouts, risky sexual behaviors, STI's, unintentional and intentional injuries, and death.

If you are going to drink, it's better to "casually" drink and not binge by keeping your BAC% in the "sweet spot" (.05% BAC or below).

Visit the UA Campus Health Service's Health Promotion and Preventive Services department to get a free Safer Drinking Limit Card to determine your personal "sweet spot."



**wildfact**

According to the CDC, the groups at highest risk for binge drinking are 18-34 years old, males, whites, non-Hispanics, and people with higher household incomes. 30% of binge drinkers are 18-24 years old.



**Got a question about alcohol?**

Email it to [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu)



[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

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