

Alcohol Poisoning Deaths in Minnesota

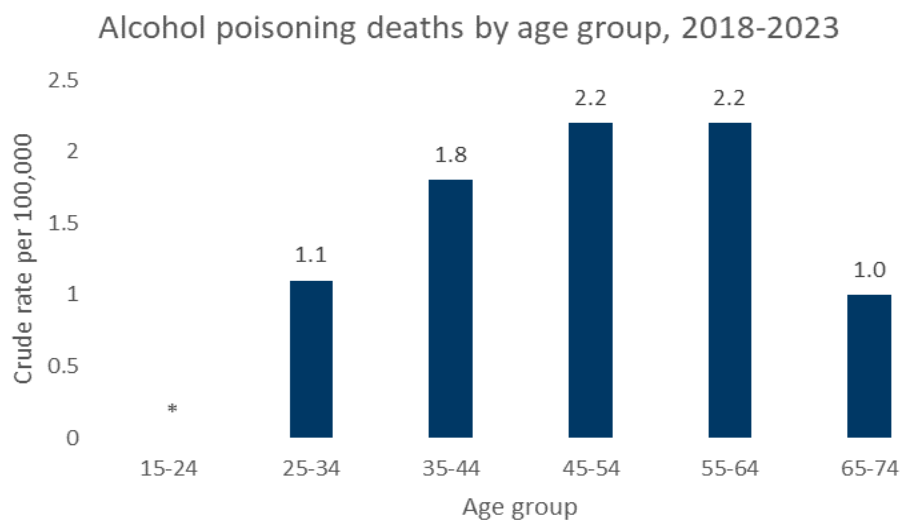
Alcohol poisoning, or alcohol overdose, occurs when a person consumes alcohol faster than their liver can process it. This leads to a rise in blood-alcohol concentration, and the areas of the brain responsible for basic life-support functions—such as breathing, heart rate, and temperature control—are impaired. This can ultimately lead to permanent brain damage or death.

- Nationally, 2,434 people died from alcohol poisoning on average each year during 2018 to 2023 [age-adjusted rate 0.7 per 100,000].
- In Minnesota, an estimated 62 people died each year from alcohol poisoning between 2018 and 2023 [age adjusted rate 1.1 per 100,000].

These numbers have remained relatively stable over time. In these cases, alcohol poisoning was the underlying cause of death, but alcohol poisoning can also be a contributing cause of death. In 2023, for example, alcohol poisoning was a contributing cause of death for 427 people in Minnesota.¹

One of the greatest risk factors for alcohol poisoning is binge drinking. Binge drinking is defined as consuming four or more drinks for females, or five or more drinks for males, on an occasion.

Alcohol poisoning death rates peak among 45–64-year-old adults in Minnesota



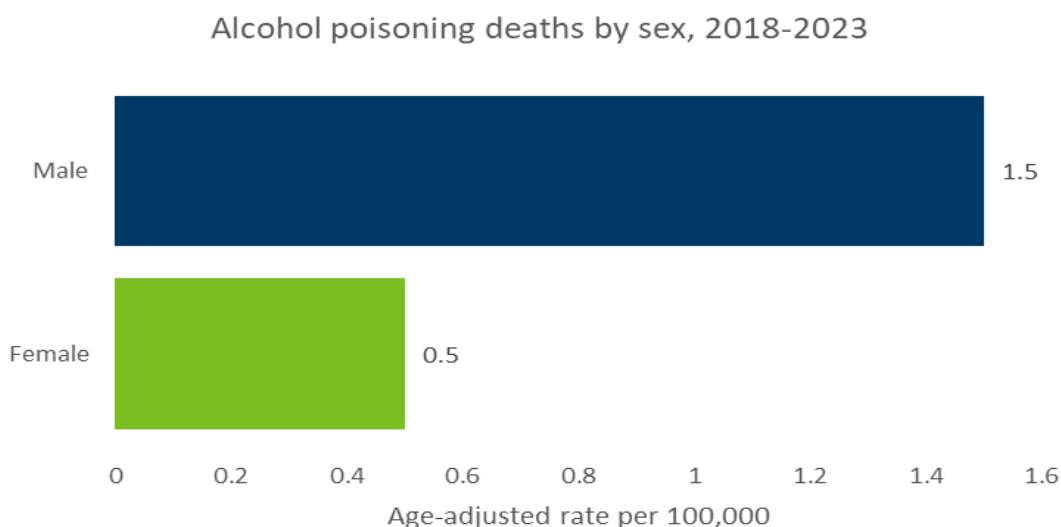
*suppressed due to small numbers.

Alcohol poisoning deaths can occur among people at any age. Minnesotans ages 45–64 years experienced the highest rates of alcohol poisoning fatalities during 2018 to 2023. However, adults ages 55–64 were less likely to report binge drinking in 2023 (12.6%) compared to younger

¹ United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Multiple Cause of Death on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2024.

adults (22.1% among 18–24-year-olds, 24.0% among 25–34-year-olds, and 24.5% among 35–44-year-olds). Adults ages 45–54 were not less likely to report binge drinking than the younger age groups, with 21.2% reporting binge drinking in the past month.²

Alcohol poisoning deaths differ by sex



Most alcohol poisoning deaths in Minnesota occur among males. Minnesotan males die from alcohol poisoning at a rate about three times higher than females. Additionally, Black or African American Minnesotans experience a higher rate of death due to alcohol poisoning compared to white Minnesotans (1.6 per 100,000 compared to 1.0 per 100,000). Numbers are too small to obtain reliable rates for American Indian or Asian Minnesotans.

What can be done to reduce rates of alcohol poisoning?

Everyone can

- Use the free and confidential [Check Your Drinking](https://cdc.gov/alcohol/checkyourdrinking/index.html) (<https://cdc.gov/alcohol/checkyourdrinking/index.html>) to learn more about your drinking and create a plan for drinking less or not drinking.
- Avoid binge drinking. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake to **two drinks or less in a day for males or one drink or less in a day for females**, according to the current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf) (https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023.

- Call 911 for anyone experiencing life-threatening signs of alcohol poisoning. Do not wait for more symptoms to develop. Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:
 - Confusion, difficulty staying conscious, or inability to wake up
 - Clammy skin, vomiting, seizure
 - Dulled responses (e.g., no gag reflex)
 - Slow (less than eight breaths per minute) or irregular (10 seconds or more between breaths) breathing
 - Low body temperature (indicated by shivers and pale or bluish skin color)

Health care providers can

- Screen all adult patients for binge drinking.
- Counsel all patients who drink excessively, and provide referrals to treatment, as appropriate.

States and communities can

- Track alcohol-related injuries and deaths.
- Support evidence-based policies to reduce binge drinking.

Visit [CDC's Preventing Alcohol-Related Harms](https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/prevention/index.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/prevention/index.html>) to learn more.

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Minnesota Department of Health
Injury Prevention and Mental Health Division Prevention Section
P.O. Box 64975
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0975
Kari.Gloppen@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

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