



## **A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC**

### *In Everything Moderation*

*Binge Drinking Among Women and High School Girls – United States, 2011*

Recorded: January 22, 2013; posted: January 24, 2013

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

For many people, drinking alcohol is a regular part of social occasions, but moderation is important. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to serious health and social problems. A recent report found that binge drinking is common among women and girls.

Dr. Dafna Kanny is a senior scientist with CDC's Alcohol Program in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the dangers of binge drinking. Welcome to the show, Dafna.

[Dr. Kanny] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dafna, how many women and girls die each year from excessive alcohol use?

[Dr. Kanny] Excessive alcohol use causes about 23,000 deaths in women and girls each year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Define binge drinking for us.

[Dr. Kanny] Binge drinking is a dangerous behavior that is defined for women as consumption of four or more alcoholic drinks on an occasion, five or more for men. An occasion is generally considered to be about two to three hours. Binge drinking is the most common and most deadly pattern of excessive alcohol use.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the characteristics of women who engage in binge drinking?

[Dr. Kanny] Fourteen million, or one in eight, women binge drink three times a month, averaging about six drinks per binge. One in five high school girls binge drink. Binge drinking is most common in young women and high school girls, whites and Hispanics, and women with incomes of \$75,000 or more annually. Most binge drinkers are not alcohol dependent.

[Dr. Gaynes] For women and girls, what are some possible negative consequences of binge drinking?

[Dr. Kanny] Binge drinking increases risk of injuries, violence, breast cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy. Drinking during

pregnancy can lead to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dafna, what is considered “moderate” alcohol consumption?

[Dr. Kanny] If you choose to drink, the US Dietary Guidelines recommend moderation – up to one drink per day for women or up two drinks per day for men.

[Dr. Gaynes] For women who are having a problem with their drinking, what should they do?

[Dr. Kanny] Each of us can make a choice not to binge drink. If you have friends who binge drink, share with them the risks of binge drinking and set a good example. You can also talk to your health care provider about it.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about binge drinking?

[Dr. Kanny] You can find more information on excessive alcohol use and binge drinking at the CDC’s Alcohol Program website at [cdc.gov/alcohol](http://cdc.gov/alcohol).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Dafna. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Dr. Dafna Kanny about the dangers of binge drinking.

This behavior puts them at increased risk for injuries, violence, unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, and breast cancer. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation – up to one drink a day for women or two for men.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.