



HEALTH NOTES



amen
Adventist Medical
Evangelism Network

AMEN's mission is to motivate, train, and equip Seventh-day Adventist health-care professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world, hastening His return. To learn more about AMEN and get involved go to: amensda.org.

Principal contributor: Elvin Adams, MD

Secondhand Alcohol Harms

WE ALL KNOW about the harmful effects of secondhand tobacco smoke. There is also harm from exposure to secondhand alcohol. Alcoholic drinks not only affect drinkers themselves, but also their partners, families, and many in the public as well.

A carefully conducted nationwide survey has just been published that documents alcohol's secondhand harm in the United States.¹ Alcohol costs people other than the drinker, time, money, and peace of mind. It affects people's physical and mental health as well as their quality of life. The societal costs of alcohol are estimated to be twice those incurred by drinkers themselves.

Women report marriage and family harm as well as financial strains from other drinkers. Men are more likely to be assaulted by other drinkers and to be passengers in the cars of drunk drivers that end up in crashes. Those most often harmed by alcohol are unmarried, unemployed, and of low income.

The harms documented in this study include: (1) being harassed, bothered, called names, or otherwise insulted; (2) having clothing or belongings ruined; (3) feeling threatened or afraid; (4) having house, car, or other property vandalized; (5) being pushed, hit, or assaulted; (6) being physically harmed; (7) being in a traffic accident; (8) being a passenger in a vehicle with a drunk driver; (9) having family problems or marriage difficulties; and (10) having financial trouble.

Here is a table showing the percent of men and women in the United States affected by several of these secondary alcohol related harms. The projected total number of people affected are given in the second column. These data are for a single year. Since harms occur intermittently and over several years the numbers are worse than projected in this table.

Past-year prevalence of types of alcohol's harm to men and women

HARM TYPE	PERCENT AFFECTED	NUMBER AFFECTED
Harassment/threats	16.3%	39.7 million
Property/vandalism	5.1%	12.3 million
Physical aggression	3.9%	9.5 million
Driving related	6.3%	15.2 million
Family & financial	4.2%	10.3 million
Any alcohol harm	22%	53.3 million



Both alcohol and tobacco are “legal” drugs. What a sad toll of harm to society are caused by these lethal drugs. Unfortunately, there are legislative actions to legalize additional harmful substances. Only time will reveal the harms of legalizing the use of toxic substances.

THE BIBLE warns of the harmful effects of alcohol use. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise”
—*Proverbs 20:1 (NKJV)*

ELLEN WHITE warned, “Under the influence of liquor, men would be led to commit crimes of all kinds.... By leading men to drink alcohol, Satan would cause them to descend lower and lower in the scale. Satan is taking the world captive through the use of liquor and tobacco, tea and coffee. The God-given mind, which should be kept clear, is perverted by the use of narcotics. The brain is no longer able to distinguish correctly. The enemy has control. Man has sold his reason for that which makes him mad. He has no sense of what is right.”

—*Counsels for the Church, p. 101*

Pray that God will help preserve you in this world from the harms that can come to you from the use of alcohol through no fault of your own.

¹ M. B. Nayak, et.al, “Alcohol’s Secondhand Harms in the United States: New Data on Prevalence and Risk Factors,” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, May 2019, p. 273-281.

