

Extreme binge drinking occurs in high school

Extreme defined as consuming at least 10 drinks in a row

By LINDSEY TANNER
AP MEDICAL WRITER

CHICAGO — Almost 1 in 10 U.S. high school seniors have engaged in recent extreme binge drinking — downing at least 10 drinks at a rate that barely budged over six years, according to a government-funded report.

Less severe binge drinking, consuming five or more drinks in a row, has mostly declined in recent years among teens. But for high school seniors, the 2011 rate for 10 drinks in a row — 9.6 percent — was down only slightly from 2005.

The most extreme level — 15 or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks — didn't change from 2005 to 2011. Almost 6 percent of high school seniors reported recently drinking that amount.

The number of seniors engaging in the most extreme drinking "is really concerning because they're most at risk for the really severe consequences," including reckless driving, car accidents and alcohol poisoning, said lead researcher Megan Patrick of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.

Extreme binge drinking may be a behavior that's "more entrenched" among some teens, and thus harder to change, Patrick said.

The new report is an analysis of survey results that the university does for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. It's based on classroom questionnaires given to more than 16,000 high school seniors; a question on extreme binge drinking was added in 2005.

Whites and males were the most likely to engage in all levels of binge drinking, the report found. Students with more educated parents had higher rates of binge drinking

than other kids, but lower rates of extreme binge drinking.

Extreme binge drinking was most common in rural areas and the Midwest and least common in the West.

The report was published in JAMA Pediatrics.

Young adults generally have higher levels of extreme drinking; a 2012 survey by the same group found that more than 1 in 4 people aged 19 to 30 had recently consumed at least 10 drinks in a row and more than 1 in 10 had at least 15 drinks in a row.

A journal editorial says the new report may help explain why hospitalizations for alcohol and drug overdoses among teens and young adults have increased in recent years despite ongoing declines in less severe binge drinking.

In the early 1980s, before all states made 21 the minimum legal drinking age, more than 40 percent of high school seniors said they had recently downed more than five drinks in a row, according to data cited in the editorial.

The 5-plus binge drinking rate steadily declined in more recent years for seniors, to 22 percent in 2011, although it was 24 percent in 2012, according to a previous report from the survey group. The new report has slightly different percentages because it is based on a subgroup of previous surveys. Survey results for 2012 on extreme binge drinking among seniors haven't been published yet.

Online:
Journal:
<http://jamapediatrics.com>
Monitoring the Future:
<http://www.monitoringthefuture.org>

Mental Health Moment

By BARBARA WILLIAMSON

Many times, I hear clients say they want to simplify their lives because they feel they have lost control of their time. They want to have more time to do things they *want* to do, both at work and home.

A recent poll showed 65 percent of people say they are spending free time doing things they'd rather not do. That's a sad commentary of today's lifestyle.

The 80/20 principle, first stated by Vilfredo Pareto in 1897, says that 20 percent of our effort produces 80 percent of the results.

That means a small number of resources are highly productive, and a large number, 80 percent, are not very productive at all. Here are some examples:

- Twenty percent of things in your house are used 80 percent of the time.
- Eighty percent of things in your house are used 20 percent of the time.
- Twenty percent of your activities give you 80 percent of your satisfaction.
- Twenty percent of books in a bookstore account for 80 percent of its sales.

The challenge is to identify those few vital items that produce the greatest value for you.

Focus on activities that result in satisfaction, such as money, better health, more free time. Also identify those many trivial items that don't lead to things like satisfaction, money, better health and more free time.

Those activities are taking up 80 percent of your time. Doesn't it make sense to deemphasize them in favor of the vital 20 percent?

The first step to simplifying one's life is an examination of how you spend your time now.

Start keeping track of how much time you spend on Facebook, or texting, or mindlessly watching television in addition to all the other obligations and activities you have.

Take some of that time and spend a small portion of every day, maybe 15 minutes, thinking about this question: What are the elements that contribute to my life feeling so complicated? Simplifying one's life is not easy. We may think we need more help, but if you hire someone to help you get more done, you will actually have added another complication to your life rather than making it simpler.

The bottom line is we need fewer responsibilities. We need to learn to say no.

In "Simplify Your Life: 100 Ways to Slow Down and Enjoy the Things That Really Matter," author Elaine St. James says people get into trouble because they agree to do things they really don't have time to do.

We are proud of our high productivity and involvement, but it comes with a high price, a complicated life that leaves no time for you. St. James suggests you actually schedule time for yourself on your calendar at the beginning of every month.

Start to simplify your life by first taking an inventory of how you spend your time, and then determine what obligations and activities you can either reduce, combine or do away with altogether.

If you find you are really stressing out about it, schedule an appointment with a counselor or social worker to help you sort through things.

Williamson is a licensed professional clinical counselor at The Center for Mental Health and Well-Being, Findlay. If you have a mental health question, please write to Mental Health Moment, The Courier, P.O. Box 609, Findlay, OH 45839.



Williamson

Weekend Doctor

By DR. THOMAS F. VAIL

I was recently interviewed by the editors of HGTV magazine for their September issue to comment in their section "How Bad is It ..." and to explain whether rented bowling shoes pose a health risk.

I have commented vigorously throughout my blogs, Facebook and Twitter about the importance of sterilizing shoes to prevent fungal infections of the feet and toenails, and was asked the question, "What may be lurking inside those leather lace-up bowling shoes that dozens, if not hundreds, of people have worn?"

Rented bowling shoes can be a host to several microorganisms including fungus, bacteria and the virus that causes warts.

Although the likelihood of getting a virus such as warts or a bacterial infection of the foot from rented bowling shoes is low, if you have a blister or open sore and the shoes are infected, and you are not wearing socks, then it is possible to pick up this type of infection very easily.

Fungus likes a moist, dark environment, so if bowling shoes are damp from sweat and have an odor, don't be shy, ask for another pair.

It would always be best to wear moisture-wicking socks that are copper infused or have nano bamboo charcoal fibers. Both of these materials help to promote blood circulation and restrain microbial growth.

Although it's unlikely your local bowling alley is using a UV light to disinfect the insides of shoes, this is the most effective method of killing the organisms that live in your shoes.

I recommend the sterishoe sanitizer, which is the only product clinically proven to kill up to 99.9 percent of problematic microorganisms that cause onychomycosis or toenail fungus, athlete's foot and offensive shoe odor.

I recommend this as a must for all my diabetic patients as part of their general foot care regimen since foot infections are a major health risk.

At the very least, a bowling alley should incorporate an antifungal spray or powder in-between use of their rented shoes.

The best fungicidal, sanitizing deodorant spray for your shoes is Mycomist, which incorporates the active ingredients chlorophyll, formalin, and benzalkonium chloride.

Formalin is a proven disinfectant and fumigant with penetrating power. Benzalkonium chloride is an all-purpose antibacterial agent, and is a good disinfectant for fungi. It is useful in sterile storage, and as a detergent as well as a germicide. Chlorophyll is used effectively for deodorization.

Other good choices are Lotrimine AF liquid spray and Zeasorb AF powder.

Without sterilizing a shoe properly, the chance for fungal infections rises. A fungal infection of the skin is easier to clear than one of the nails.

The disease, characterized by a change in a toenail's color, is often considered nothing more than a mere blemish. Left untreated, however, it can present serious problems and lead to painful thickened toenails that can take years to treat.

Also referred to as onychomycosis, fungal nails are infections underneath the surface of the nail, which penetrate the nail.

Fungal nail infections are often accompanied by a secondary bacterial and/or yeast infection in or about the nail plate, which ultimately can lead to difficulty and pain when walking or running. Symptoms may include discoloration, brittleness, loosening, thickening or crumbling of the nail.

A group of fungi, called dermatophytes, easily attack the nail and thrive on keratin, the nail's protein substance.

In some cases, when these tiny organisms take hold, the nail may become thicker, yellowish-brown or darker in color, and foul smelling. Debris may collect beneath the nail plate, white marks may frequently appear on the nail plate, and the infection is capable of spreading to other toenails, the skin, or even the fingernails.

I always recommend that people purchase their own bowling shoes if they plan on playing frequently.

Vail is with Advanced Footcare Clinic, Findlay. Questions for Blanchard Valley Health System experts may be sent to Weekend Doctor, The Courier, P.O. Box 609, Findlay, OH 45839.



Vail

HEALTH INFORMATION Medical Technology Breakthrough: Microchips Bring the Joy of Sound to Those with Hearing Loss

Chicago, IL - The world is going wireless. Phones function flawlessly without cords. We surf the Internet from planes. GPS devices give us street directions as we drive. And now - thanks to advanced microchip technology - the hearing impaired can enjoy home entertainment and mobile phones with the same ease and flexibility as those with normal hearing.

WiFi Carries Sound Directly from Devices to Ears - The ability for hearing aids to receive sound sent wirelessly from the television, stereo and computer is now a reality. Hearing aid patients no longer need awkward necklace - style devices to receive wireless audio signals. Individuals can listen "privately" through their hearing instruments at the volume they prefer. Others in the room enjoy a volume comfortable for them.

The same microprocessor technology allows hearing aid wearers to enjoy hands-free use of cell and home phones. By using a small Bluetooth™ accessory clipped to a shirt or automobile visor, clear conversation is sent from the phone to both ears. The phone can stay put away in a pocket or handbag during calls.

Clear Sound Even in the Noisiest Environments - Along with enabling direct-to-ear wireless communication, microprocessors help hearing aid wearers more easily understand speech in noisy environments. New techniques, such as band-splitting and specialized sound classification,

facilitate more natural hearing in challenging environments. Now, instead of across-the-board amplification, patients can prioritize important sounds, such as speech, while retaining auditory awareness of less critical sounds. Patients can also choose to focus on speech exclusively.

Breakthrough in Hearing Technology - The new line of Beltone Promise™ hearing aids sends phone conversation and TV directly into hearing instruments, while letting users stay connected to their surroundings at the same time. Beltone is the only manufacturer to utilize a robust 2.4 GHz wireless signal - which, when coupled with the Promise's advanced microprocessor - allows wireless transmission of sound up to 23 feet from entertainment devices.

The Beltone Promise hearing instrument's Spatial Directionality™ feature enables more natural hearing in noisy surroundings. Using directional technology, one ear focuses on speech, while the other ear monitors sounds from around the individual. Speech Spotter Pro™ allows the user to focus on speech, and tuneout background noise completely.

For a free hearing screening and free trial of Promise hearing aids, visit one of Beltone's 1,500 hearing care centers located throughout the nation. For more information, or to find the location nearest to you, call Beltone at **419-299-4011** or visit them online at www.beltonehearingaid.com.

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There is no fee whatsoever for participating in this field test. Special testing will be done to determine the increased benefits of this technology. Benefits of hearing aids vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noisy environment, accuracy of hearing test, and proper fit. This is a wonderful opportunity to determine if hearing help is available for your hearing loss while you evaluate your performance with this technology.

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