

What is healthy drinking?



Many people believe that either their relationship to alcohol is

healthy, or that they are an alcoholic. Can there be no in-between?

While very helpful to some people, labels such as "alcoholic," "addict," and "abuser" can get in the way of taking an honest look at what is really happening with your relationship to alcohol and drugs. Those people who fit the popular image of alcoholism are only a fraction of the people whose drinking and/or drug use is harmful. The shame and stigma attached to these labels can cause people to turn away from taking a good look at themselves when they may have reason for concern.

Suppose that we described all people who drive cars as safe and responsible, until they get into a major accident, and then we label them "bad drivers." People who don't stop at red lights, people who swerve unpredictably, people who drive at 100 MPH – all fine. A person who gets into an accident – a bad driver. You can see the problem here. It's clearer and more useful to evaluate each person's driving individually and see what ways they can drive more safely, for themselves and those around them. Evaluating their driving after an accident is too

late.

With all health-related behaviors there are risks and benefits to the decisions we make. While it's safest to abstain from alcohol, there are important and valid reasons why people drink [1].

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Links

[1] <https://studenthealth.ucsf.edu/healthcare-services/drug-alcohol-consultation/alcohol-resources/why-do-i-drink>