

Alcohol Awareness Month

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Speakers: **Anjali**

Talking point ideas:

- What Alcohol Awareness Month is all about and why it's important
- What are some protective strategies students can practice to stay safe if they decide to drink
- Other useful information you think pertains to Alcohol Awareness Month

Introduction

Welcome to Live Well, Be Well! A podcast where we speak candidly about all things wellness! My name is Anjali Mishra, pronouns are she/her/her, and I'm an SHA specializing in Alcohol and Other Drugs at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, we'll be discussing Alcohol Awareness Month, protective behavioral strategies, and other interesting facts!

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

So I first wanted to begin by going over what Alcohol Awareness Month is and why it's important. This public health program is organized by the National Council on alcoholism and Drug Dependency as a way of increasing outreach and education regarding the dangers of alcoholism and issues related to alcohol. It began in April 1987, so 33 years ago, with the intention of targeting college aged students who might be drinking too much as part of their newfound freedom.

One of the major reasons I think Alcohol awareness month is important is to point out the stigma that still surrounds alcoholism and substance abuse in general. For many, denial is a common trait among those struggling with alcoholism or alcohol abuse. They often underestimate the amount they drink, the duration of their drinking problem, the impact it has had on their life, or overestimate their ability to control their drinking or to quit. In order to address these topics, many organizations in April launch campaigns to draw attention to the causes of alcoholism, the signs and effects of the condition, how to talk to a loved one about a drinking problem, and how to find treatment options.

So with that history provided, I now wanted to share some of top reported protective behavioral strategies from a 2019 UCSD survey. I think these are really great tips because they're very practical and easy to do and don't require you to dramatically change anything while still having a great time! Some things you can do before you start drinking are: 1. Determine in advance not to exceed a set number of drinks 2. Eat

before, during, and after drinking 3. Have a designated driver and a friend who can tell you when you've had enough. While you're drinking, 1. Keep track of number of drinks 2. Drink non-alcoholic beverages in between alcohol ones 3. Stick to one kind of drink and 4. Stay with the same group of friends.

Another topic I wanted to discuss was blood alcohol content (BAC). This is the ratio of alcohol to total blood volume and it varies based on how much alcohol you have consumed as well as your height, weight, and gender. I find it interesting that "tolerance" has no impact on your BAC. The things that happen when we drink - lack of coordination, vomiting, etc. - are your body's way of telling you that you've had too much. People with high alcohol tolerance have learned how to mask the effects of alcohol, but it doesn't mean their BAC is any lower. So just because you might feel fine, your ratio of alcohol to total blood volume might not reflect that.

There are a couple BAC levels that are good to know.

If your BAC is above 0.01, and you're under 21 you'll have your license revoked for 60 days.

BAC of 0.05 is known as the perfect buzz. This is when all of the things we like about alcohol happen, such as relaxation, sociability, and liquid courage, but typically none of the bad things.

0.08 is the intoxication driving limit if you're over 21. A first offense DUI is 2 days in jail, a \$2500 fine, a 4 month license suspension, and an installation of an ignition interlock device that requires you to blow into a breathalyzer before starting the ignition of the car. So basically, DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.

Lastly, a BAC of 0.1 is when the depressant effect of alcohol becomes apparent and drowsiness sets in.

It's also worth going over what a standard drink is. Because the amount of liquid in a glass doesn't necessarily match up to how much alcohol is in it, a standardized definition was created. In the US, one standard drink contains roughly 14 grams of pure alcohol. This is equivalent to 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, and 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits. These values might not mean much but the lines on a red solo cup can really help you visualize this. The first line closest to the bottom is a standard drink for hard liquor, the next line is for wine, the third line for beer, and the lines above are just for aesthetics. A BAC of 0.05, which is the perfect buzz, is equivalent to 1 to 2 standard drinks per hour for women and 2 to 3 for men.

I hope these were interesting and useful facts and information that help you have a fun and safe time drinking!

Closing

So that concludes this episode of Live Well Be Well! If you like what you heard and would like to learn more about topics related to health and wellness, there's much more to come! Be sure to check out our

website sha.ucsd.edu and follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @ucsdsha. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.

General notes and guidelines:

- Once you have recorded, please send me the file (rdellacqua@ucsd.edu) and I will insert the opening and closing music, as well as schedule its release date.