



## Holiday Binge Drinking



### FIVE SIGNS YOU MAY BE ABUSING ALCOHOL

Holiday party season is in full swing and with many celebrations happening around us, even people who consider themselves social drinkers may go overboard by binge drinking, the most common pattern of excess alcohol use in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Leading Addiction Expert, **Dr. Indra Cidambi**, wants to alert people to five common signs that one might be abusing alcohol this holiday season:

1. **Using Alcohol as an Emotional Crutch:** Everyday stress can sometimes become too much during the busy holiday season, causing some people to turn to binge drinking to escape reality. According to Dr. Cidambi, almost all people struggling with addiction abuse their substance of choice for emotional reasons. Using alcohol as a method of easing negative feelings is a risky habit as it only provides temporary relief and can become a long-forming habit of alcohol abuse.
2. **Not Realizing You Went Overboard... Until It's Too Late:** One of the first signs of abusing alcohol is not knowing your limits. Many people don't realize the number of drinks they are consuming and in turn are surprised by the intoxication that "creeped up" on them so quickly. The [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) says binge drinking is when the amount consumed brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to

0.08% or above. This can happen when men consume 5 or more drinks, and when women consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours.

3. **Not Being Able to Stop Once You Start:** “If you always finish a bottle of wine once it’s opened or drink a bottle of beer and feel the need to continue drinking until you’re intoxicated, you aren’t in full control of your drinking and you may be addicted,” says Dr. Cidambi. Research from the CDC shows one in six U.S. adults binge drinks about four times a month, consuming about eight drinks per binge.

4. **Letting Responsibilities Slide:** “When you begin neglecting tasks that are important to you, you may have a drinking problem,” says Dr. Cidambi. “When drinking is prioritized over daily activities, it’s a sign to slow down. For example, are you arriving at work late because you partied too hard the night before? Are you choosing not to exercise because you’d rather be drinking?”

5. **Not Being Comfortable in Social Situations With No Alcohol** Some people are put in uncomfortable situations during the holidays and are likely to turn down invitations to social events where they know that someone will disapprove of their drinking habits. “It’s okay to have a drink or two, but if you need a drink or two in order to socialize, you may have a problem,” says Dr. Cidambi.