



How to Recognize Holiday Binge Drinking

Holiday party season is in full swing. With many celebrations happening around us, even people who consider themselves social drinkers may go overboard by binge drinking.

Binge drinking is the most common pattern of excess alcohol use in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Indra Cidambi, a leading addiction expert, wants to alert people to five common signs of alcohol abuse 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; it only provides temporary relief and can become a long-term 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

3. on Alcohol Abuse and [Alcoholism](#) says binge drinking is when the amount consumed brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 percent or

above. This can happen when men consume five or more drinks, and when women consume four or more drinks, in about two hours.

4. **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.

5. **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?"

6. **Being uncomfortable in alcohol-free situations.**

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. According to Dr. Cidambi, most people who binge drink are not always alcoholics, and having a drinking problem doesn't always lead to addiction. However, if you know someone who binge drinks or you think drinks too much, it's a good idea to contact a doctor or treatment program in your community to get help.

For more information on substance abuse dependency, addiction and treatment, please go to <http://www.recoveryCNT.com>.

About Indra Cidambi, MD

Indra Cidambi, M.D., Medical Director, Center for Network Therapy, is recognized as a leading expert and pioneer in the field of Addiction Medicine. Under her leadership the Center for Network Therapy started New Jersey's first state licensed Ambulatory (Outpatient) Detoxification program for all substances nearly three years ago. Dr. Cidambi is Board Certified in General Psychiatry and double Board Certified in Addiction Medicine (ABAM, ABPN). She is fluent in five languages, including Russian.