

# ALCOHOL USE

## ALCOHOL USE IN THE MILITARY AND VETERAN COMMUNITY



### SIGNS OF ADDICTION

- Preoccupation with use.
- Failed efforts to cut back use.
- Increasing frequency, amount of alcohol use.
- Needing more to achieve feeling (**building a tolerance**).
- Rapid intake
- Protecting/hiding supply for '**just in case**' moments.
- Blacking out after drinking.
- Family, work and legal problems.

### KEY FACTS

- **61%** of active duty service members who **attempted suicide** were under the influence of alcohol in 2019.
- Alcohol dependence can cause **life-threatening** seizures and is considered the most 'deadly' substance to withdraw from.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- **40%** of **married service members** drink "heavily" and in excess.
- **53%** of emergency room visits of active duty military involved alcohol.
- **22%** of Army soldiers in 2019 reported **problematic alcohol use**.

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#### ***"U.S. Military is America's Heaviest-Drinking Profession, Survey Finds"***

Alcohol use is associated with numerous negative outcomes among active duty service members, military veterans, and their families. It is also one of the most highly abused substances in the military cohort.

Alcohol, like most substances, has a combination of stimulating and sedative effects that can seriously affect one's decision-making process, worsen sleep, and make the overall transition process extremely difficult. Alcohol also fuels anger and irritability, worsens cognitive effects of stress, increases the likelihood of nightmares occurring, and the potential for a suicide attempt and/or suicidal ideation nearly triples in veterans.

Veterans are placed at an increased adverse health risk by certain operational environments and toxic exposures; by frequently drinking alcohol, they increase their risks and likelihood of being diagnosed with cancers (liver, pancreatic, esophageal) by **five-times** due to the toxic chemicals in alcohol and the impact it has on an individual's natural immune system.



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## ALCOHOL USE AND HEALTH



- Stomach inflammation
- Malnutrition
- Gastric ulcers



- Frequent colds
- Aspiration
- Sleep apnea



- High blood pressure
- Irregular heartbeat
- Stroke



- Vitamin deficiency
- Bleed and/or clot risk
- Anemia



- Cirrhosis
- Liver failure
- Diabetes Type-II



- Low sex drive
- Infertility
- Muscle wasting



## ALCOHOL USE, TBI, AND PTS

**Suffering from military-related post-traumatic stress and addiction is synergistic, meaning the combined impact on the veteran is greater than the impact of each concern individually.**

- Increased impulsiveness, poor decision-making.
- Impaired brain healing.
- Personality changes.
- Triggering of PTS symptoms.
- Increased insomnia and nightmares.
- Long-term memory loss and confusion.
- Risk of repeat brain injury doubles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES



### TOM SATTERLY

CSM (ret.) Delta Force  
Author and Co-Founder of  
All Secure Foundation

"We see it all the time, the veteran (and in turn the couple) often faces shame, rage, PTSD, and addiction.

They want a better relationship and they keep screwing it up and they know it, so they remove themselves.

Eighty-nine percent of suicides happen because they're on alcohol or drugs and [there is] a family issue..."

## #UNDERSTANDYOUREXPOSURES

### ARTICLE

- ***I am an Addict*** - Havok Journal - September 22, 2020
- ***Liquid Poison*** - Havok Journal - April 29, 2021

### PODCAST

- **FieldCraft Survival** - Ep. 157 : Delta Operator Chris Van Sant

### BOOKS

- **Arsenal of Hope** - Jen Satterly
- **Tip of the Spear** - Ryan Hendrickson
- **Thank You for Your Service** - David Finkel
- **The Things They Cannot Say** - Kevin Sikes