Hey OU Family!
It’s finals week for you students and teleworking business as usual for the rest of us. Despite our state re-opening in phases, many of you are still spending much of your time at home studying, working or continuing to quarantine during your leisure time. So, I wanted to share with you some pertinent reports that recently came out about alcohol use and effects during the pandemic and give you reminders of safer alcohol behaviors.

Two companies recently shared some app-based alcohol consumption data. BACtrack, which is a Blood Alcohol Concentration app, reported a rise in the rates of drinking at home on the clock. In fact, as many as 4 in 10 people are drinking at home on the clock according to its data. Regarding Oklahoma specifically, a Fishbowl workplace app study reported 39.74% of Oklahoma employees responded “Yes” to drinking while working from home. So, what was most likely weekend drinking pre-pandemic is being replaced in part by weekday drinking. Oklahoma’s Fishbowl data resembles that of a recent alcohol.org study showing 41% of Oklahomans are drinking during normal work hours. Of the 41%, males reported a preference for beer while females reported a preference for wine. Nationwide, 35% of Americans reporting an increased likelihood of drinking more alcohol while self-isolating.

I share these reports with you to remind you that alcohol is an unhealthy way to cope with academic and work stress and isolation, and it, in fact, weakens your immune system during a time when we need to remain as healthy as possible.

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Overconsumption of alcohol can also lead to an Alcohol Use Disorder, which could prove problematic as we transition back to a new academic and workplace normal. 

*If you choose to drink*, and especially if you’re finding you’re drinking more these days, then make a goal to return to moderate alcohol consumption, which is recommended by the CDC, your county health department and local prevention specialists. *For those needing a quick moderation reminder: 12 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine and 15 oz of hard liquor.* If you found yourself stockpiling alcohol in the early days of the pandemic, then don’t feel a rush or need to consume it. Your body can only process one standard serving of alcohol per hour and the CDC recommends no more than one (for females) to two (for males) standard drinks per day. Doesn’t sound like a lot, does it? With all of the physical exercise many of us are getting in as an effective coping mechanism, know that drinking even in moderation has a negative impact on the active body.

According to the NCAA’s Sport Science Institute, alcohol consumption:
- decreases aerobic performance
- impairs motor skills and decreases strength, power and sprint performance
- slows reaction time and impairs precision, equilibrium, hand-eye coordination, accuracy, balance, judgment, information processing, focus, stamina, strength, power and speed for up to 72 hours (three days)
- slows recovery
- negatively affects body composition
- increases the risk for nutrient deficiencies.
- increases risk of illness and injury
- disrupts sleep

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Again, as society begins to reopen, remain mindful of what and how much of any substance you put in your body and stick to these simple tips:

- Plan ahead
- Share your exercise/health & wellness goals
- Eat before or while you’re drinking
- Pace yourself (moderation)
- Stay social (avoid drinking in isolation)
- Check in on friends/loved ones
- End the day/evening with water!

OU Health Promotion cares about you and your health! If you find your alcohol or other drug consumption is problematic, then don’t hesitate to seek professional support at our University Counseling Center or your local support facilities if you’re spending the upcoming summer out of state.

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