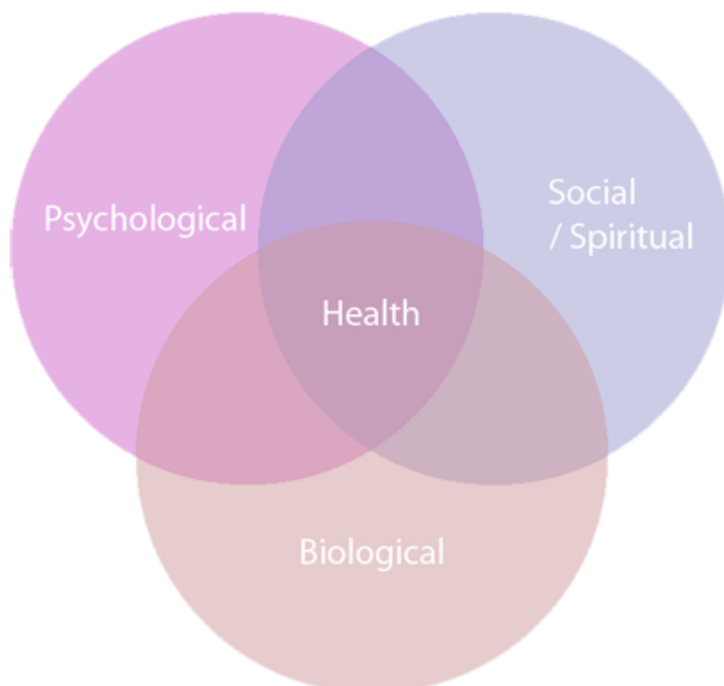


Genetics and Addiction

Studies have begun to emerge that show the link between Addiction and Genetics. While there isn't a specific gene, there are a series of genetic traits that could factor into the link between genetics and addiction.

If someone comes from a family where a parent or grandparent struggled with substance misuse, they have a higher chance of addiction compared to those who didn't. Additionally, through brain imaging, researchers have looked at a number of a certain type of dopamine receptors (known as D2). If a person has lower levels of D2, according to the research, they may have a higher chance of becoming dependent on alcohol, cocaine and heroin and how many of these receptors people have is genetically determined.



Alcoholism is the most widely researched addiction because it has such a long history in many cultures. According to the US National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the children of people who are dependent on alcohol are 3-5 times more likely to develop the disorder than the rest of the population.

However, this does not mean everyone with a genetic predisposition for addiction is destined to develop a drug or alcohol problem. The risk factors for addiction are varied and include things like genes, personality traits, and even brain structure, but also individual choices, early exposure, and environmental factors.

Environmental Factors and Addiction

- Family
 - The most common environmental factor of addiction is family interaction. Relationships with family members, parenting styles, and interaction with guardians play a major role in mental health issues, including substance misuse disorders.
- School
 - A student's performance in school, their commitment to their education, and the availability of quality friendships can be a factor in addiction.
- Peers
 - A person whose friends engage in drug use and misuse is far more likely to do the same. In fact, more than any other factors, this is considered the biggest risk factor for addiction. However, it's not just close friend that can influence a person's use of drugs or alcohol. It could be an extended peer group at school or the general attitude of the school's student body when it comes to drugs or alcohol.
 - On the opposite end of the spectrum, a person who is bullied or not included in any of their school's peer groups may seek solace in drugs or alcohol to cope with their loneliness.
- Media
 - Media can play a big role in influencing this kind of behavior, particularly in adolescents and teens who watch actors on TV or in movies engaging in these kinds of behaviors. Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol are often glorified in the media, being used and joked about in ways that seem fun and easy and don't always show the consequences of their use.
- Culture:
 - Culture and religion can trigger addictive behaviors, including the geographic area in which you grow up, beliefs prevalent in your culture, teachings related to shame and the exclusion or partaking in religious activities. For example, some cultures allow men to drink while women are prohibited from the same behavior.
 - Cultural norms can influence problematic behaviors, especially when widely adopted by an entire community and when a person is exposed to them in early childhood. Often, people will develop an addiction in rebellion against certain cultural norms and upbringing.
- Community
 - If a person lives in a community where drug use — and misuse — is prevalent, they will be more likely to fall into it themselves.

What Causes Addiction? 6 Environmental Factors

1. Family & Home Environment
2. Friendships & Social Interactions
3. Social Media & Online Interactions
4. Unrealistic Portrayals of Real Life in Media
5. Culture & Religion
6. Locations Associated With Your Addiction

Thanksgiving Holiday and Drinking

Thanksgiving is a time together with your family and friends, and remind ourselves what we are grateful for. But on top of the turkey, mash potatoes and cranberry sauce, drinking is also very prominent during the Thanksgiving holiday. It was found that men drink an average of 3.1 drinks during Thanksgiving dinner, while women drink an average 2.4 drinks.

During the Thanksgiving weekend, more than 45 million people travel by car. Heavy travel traffic and people who are under the influence of alcohol, spells disaster for the roadways. In 2021 there were 13,384 fatalities in alcohol-impaired motor vehicle traffic crashes, accounting for 31% of all traffic fatalities in the United States that year. Additionally in that same year, during the Thanksgiving holiday period, more than four times as many drivers involved in fatal crashes were alcohol-impaired during nighttime hours than during the day.

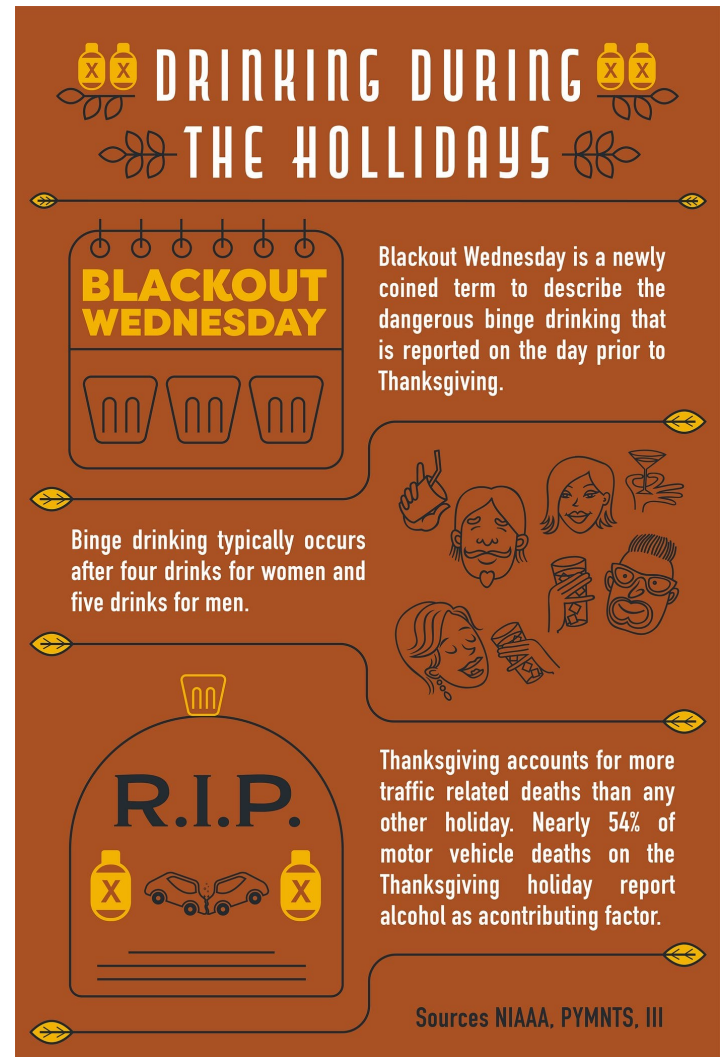
“Blackout” Wednesday

There are many names that Thanksgiving Eve goes by. Drinksgiving. Drunksgiving. Blackout Wednesday and

it has become the first drinking weekend of the holiday season. Blackout Wednesday began as a college tradition to kickstart the long weekend break to celebrate with old friends before returning to school for finals. This unofficial holiday encourages both binge drinking and as well as underage drinking. There is an increase risk of a DUI charge as most US cities increase law enforcement presence on this day.

Staying Safe during Thanksgiving Weekend

- Don't overbuy alcohol
- Choose a designated driver — Choosing a designated driver before Thanksgiving Dinner will make everyone feel more comfortable.
 - If you are unable to find a designated driver or your designated driver drinks, Uber, Lyft and other rideshare companies are a common go-to for safe rides.
- Plan activities — keep everyone busy with board games, a movie marathon, a trivia session, or anything else you know they love to cut down on the drinking.
- Offer the option of spending the night — if you're able, you may want to let guests know they can spend the night at your home or in a nearby hotel at your expense if you're concerned about them driving.



Gratitude

Gratitude is when someone feels thankful for the good things that they have in their life. This could be stuff people often take for granted such as having a place to live, food, clean water, friends and family. It is all about taking a moment to reflect on how lucky someone is whenever something good happens, whether it's small or big.

Gratitude can:

- Boost your ability to learn and make smart decisions.
- Balance out negative emotions. People who often feel grateful are happier, less stressed, and less depressed. Rather than focusing on what you don't have, notice what you do have.
- Lead to caring actions. When you're grateful for someone's kindness, you may be more likely to be nice in return. Your gratitude can also have a positive effect on someone else's actions. Thanking people can make it more likely they'll do something thoughtful again.
- Help you build better relationships. When you feel and express heartfelt gratitude and respect to people in your life, it creates loving bonds. It also builds trust and helps you feel closer.



How to make Gratitude a habit?

- Say thank-you often. Look for reasons to thank people and then do it. This helps you feel more grateful and makes them feel good too.
- Start a positive journal. Write about stuff you're grateful for — the entries can be brief. You can do this at bedtime each day. Try to find at least three good things that happened to you. Soon you'll start to notice more positive things about the people in your life and yourself.
- Make a gratitude jar. To help remind you to be more thankful, decorate a jar (or box) and put it where you can see it. Each day, write what you're grateful for on slips of paper and add them to the jar.
- Write a letter. Writing a letter to someone you value can help you practice gratitude in your relationships. You can give it to that person or not. Either way, the letter helps you appreciate the important people in your life.
- Find a gratitude buddy. It can help to start a healthy habit with another person, so have someone join you in being thankful. Tell a family member or friend three things you're grateful for, then ask them to do the same.

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| BRISK | GLOWING | MAZE | SPICE | |
| CHANGING | GRAND | NATIVE AMERICAN | SUPERB | |
| CHILLY | GRATEFUL | NOVEMBER | THANKSGIVING | |
| CORN | HALLOWEEN | PILGRIMS | TIME CHANGE | |
| CRANBERRY | HAPPY | PLEASANT | TURKEY | |
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McFarland is a small community south of Madison in Dane County. In January of 2017, a group of concerned citizens came together to discuss substance abuse problems in the McFarland area. The McFarland RADAR is a result of these meetings



For time, day and place of meetings, please contact Cathy Kalina at CathyK@fsmad.org

We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles

For more information go to: <https://www.radarmc.com/>

The McFarland RADAR (RADAR stands for Relevant Alcohol & Drug Awareness Resources) Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.

We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the McFarland area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.

McFarland RADAR Mission Statement

“The mission of McFarland’s RADAR Coalition is to promote healthy lifestyles in the McFarland area through alcohol and drug abuse prevention and education efforts.”

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are asking you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the McFarland area.