

# For some couples, binge drinking is routine

By Robert Preidt, HealthDay

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Binge drinking can be contagious between romantic partners, according to a new study.



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Researchers looked at 208 unmarried heterosexual dating couples in their early 20s who had face-to-face contact at least five days a week. At least one member of each couple was a university or college student and the couples had dated for a minimum of three months and an average of close to two years.

Over 28 days, the Canadian researchers found they were able to predict one partner's binge drinking based on the other partner's binge drinking.

The findings suggest that many young adults who binge drink do so because their romantic partner binge drinks, said the team at Dalhousie University in Halifax, **Nova Scotia**.

"In some respect this is a cautionary piece of research. Pick your friends and lovers carefully because they influence you more than you think," Simon Sherry, an assistant professor in the psychology department, said in a university news release.

"We're not so naive as researchers to think students are going to walk away from binge drinking. But our study shows there's a large majority of students who form romantic partnerships where alcohol is a regularly occurring theme," he added.

Questions that the researchers said need further exploration: Do heavy drinkers naturally gravitate toward each other? Does each partner have a family history of alcoholism?

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