

[IMAGE]

A Problem With Alcohol (Even When Parents Only Drink It Occasionally)?

By Editorial Staff

What's wrong with an adult over the age of 21 consuming the occasional beer, glass of wine or mixed drink? Nothing, as long as it's done in moderation and driving isn't involved. What's wrong with a parent doing the same thing? Well, even "non-problem" drinkers could be negatively impacting their children. Here's how.

Research published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Medical Association, suggests children whose parents consume alcohol regularly, even in moderation, are more likely to experience anxiety and depression compared to children from "no risk" families in which the parents do not consume alcohol. The study evaluated two-parent households only and found 24 percent of children (ages 13-19) had anxiety, depression or both. Children were 52 percent more likely to experience either or both conditions when both parents drank alcohol regularly. Mothers enrolled in the study drank approximately 2.6 times monthly, while fathers drank 3.6 times monthly, on average. That's about three drinks in a typical two-week period for moms and five drinks over the same time period for dads, according to the study.

The researchers who conducted the study were quick to point out that the relationship is not causal, meaning the study did not determine that non-problem drinking by parents *caused* mental health issues in children; and that children whose fathers had mental health issues were also more likely to experience anxiety / depression. However, it's definitely food for thought considering the prevalence of alcohol consumption among adults and rates of anxiety / depression among children.

If you're a parent, the next time you have a few drinks, consider what your child may be thinking / feeling. If nothing else, it's a reminder to always have conversations about your actions – even seemingly innocuous actions – with your kids. You could be affecting them more than you believe ... and more than they're willing to tell you.

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