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At A Glance:

Alcohol Use in Jamaica

At A Glance: Alcohol Use in Jamaica
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Table of Contents

Introduction

History of Alcohol Consumption

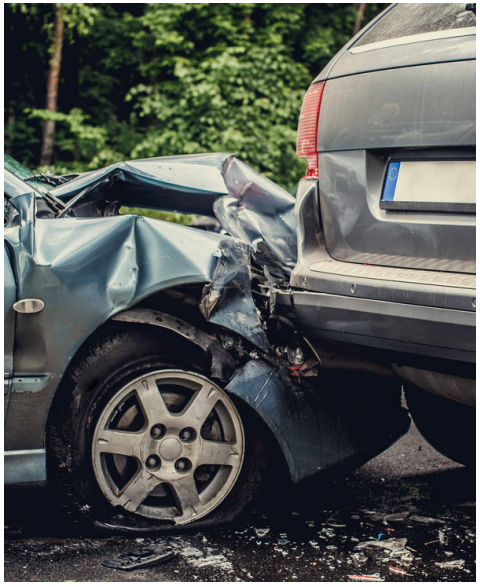
Humans have consumed alcohol or fermented beverages for over 10,000 years. It was commonly consumed during meals, and used for medicinal purposes. Fermented beverages such as wine, beer and rum have been a part of the modern human diet for hundreds of years[1].

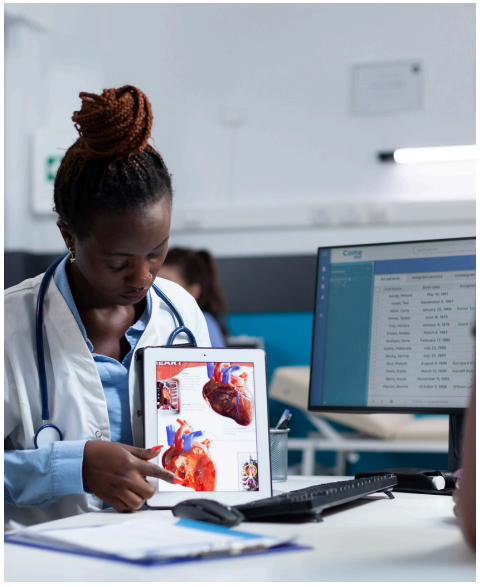
[1] Dunbar RIM, Launay J, Wlodarski R, Robertson C, Pearce E, Carney J, MacCarron P. Functional Benefits of (Modest) Alcohol Consumption. Adapt Human Behav Physiol. 2017;3(2):118-133. doi: 10.1007/s40750-016-0058-4.

Introduction

History of Alcohol Consumption

Modern alcohol use is characterized by social consumption and its use within industry for scientific and medical purposes. This “At A Glance” document is concerned with the social consumption of alcohol. Alcohol consumption is linked to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), motor vehicle accidents, intentional and unintentional injuries and violence.[1]

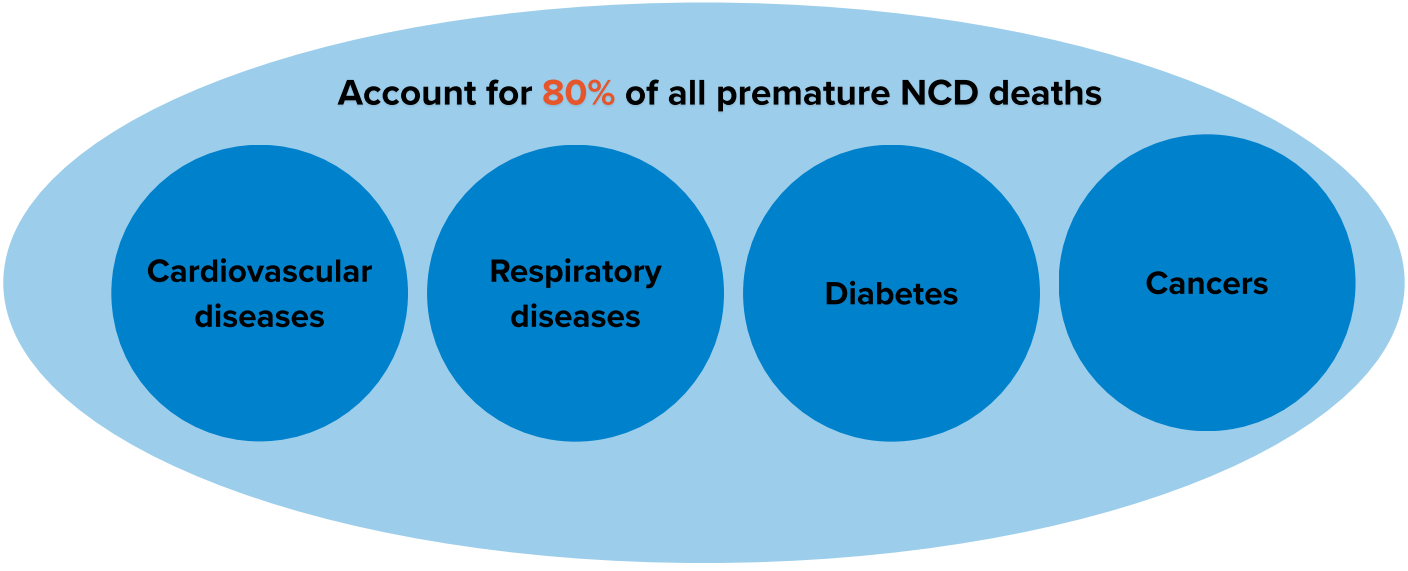




[1] Zhang X, Chen X, Yang J, Du L, Zhou Y, Li K. Meta-analysis of alcohol consumption and venous thromboembolism. J Public Health (Oxf). 2022 Aug 25;44(3):477-498. doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdab045.

Global Rise in Non-communicable Diseases

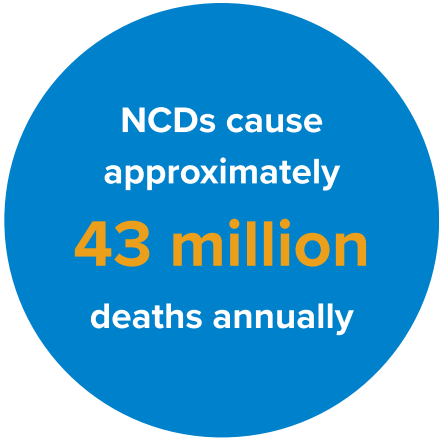
The global and regional increase in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is a major concern for health authorities. NCDs are defined as chronic metabolic conditions characterised by a slow progression in illness over an extended duration. The most common NCDs are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes, which account for over 80% of all premature NCD deaths[1].



[1] World Health Organization. Non-communicable diseases [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicablediseases

Global Rise in Non-communicable Diseases

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), NCDs account for eight out of ten deaths globally, or approximately 43 million deaths annually[1]. Additionally, NCDs are a significant contributor to premature deaths (death of persons between 30-69 years of age); an estimated 15 million deaths annually. The highest burden of NCDs and premature mortality due to NCDs occur in low and middle-income countries[2]. A PAHO report for 2021 indicates that 20.2% of Jamaicans may die before age 69 due to the four major NCDs[3].

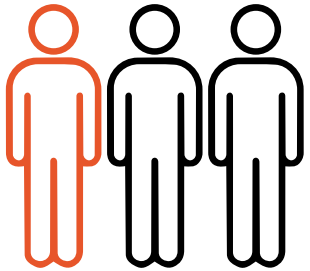


[1] NCD Alliance. Non-Communicable Disease Alliance [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from https://ncdalliance.org/
[2] Bennett J, Stevens G, Mathers C et al. NCD Countdown 2030: worldwide trends in non-communicable disease mortality and progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 The Lancet, 392, 1072-1088.
[3] NCDs at a Glance 2025 NCDs surveillance and monitoring: Noncommunicable disease mortality and risk factor prevalence in the Americas [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.paho.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/ncds-glance-2025-21-mar.pdf

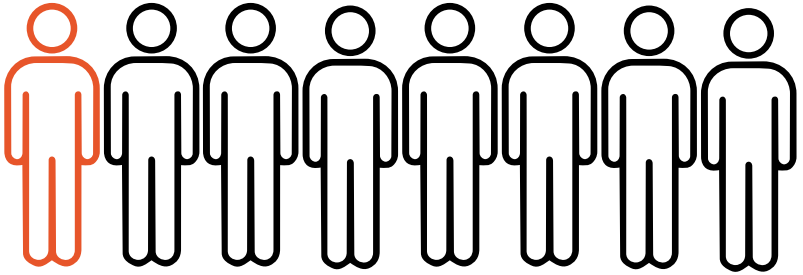
Local Rise in Non-communicable Diseases

The burden of NCDs in Jamaica is increasing. In 2018, NCDs accounted for seven out of ten deaths of Jamaicans aged 5 years and older[1]. The third Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey (JHLS III) conducted in 2016/17 reported that one in three (33.8%) Jamaicans had hypertension, while one in eight (12%) Jamaicans had diabetes[2]. Trends over the last three JHLS reports showed an increase in the proportion of common NCDs and their risk factors among Jamaicans aged 15 years and older.

1 in 3 Jamaicans had hypertension



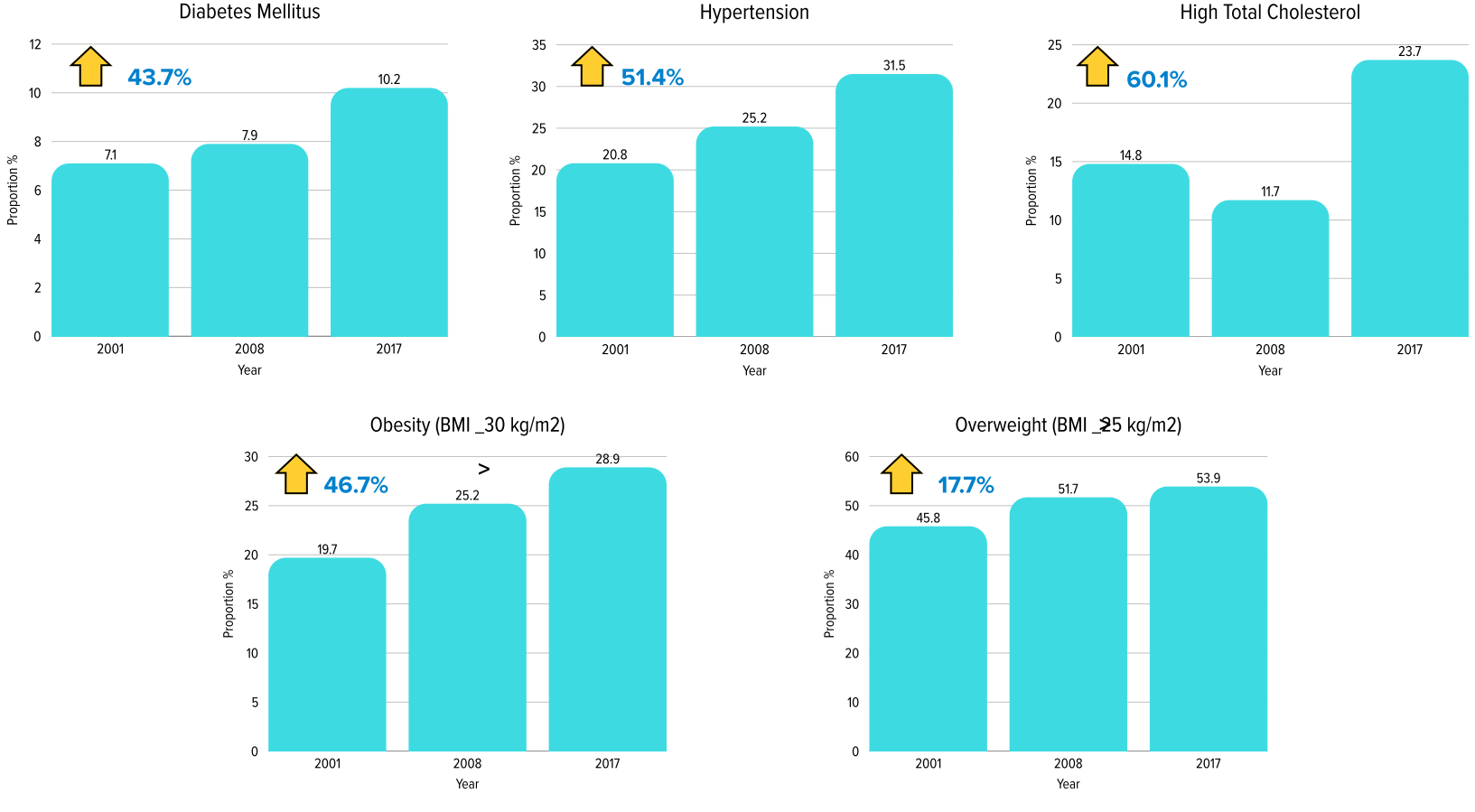
1 in 8 Jamaicans had diabetes



[1] The Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean. ECLAC Non-Communicable Diseases and their Impact on Sustainable Development. 2021 March. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/47593-non-communicable-diseases-and-their-impact-sustainable-development.
[2] Ministry Of Health And Wellness. Jamaica Health And Lifestyle Survey (III). 2024.

Introduction

Trends in NCDs and Risk Factors in Jamaica, 2001 - 2017[1,2,3]



[1] Wilks, R., Zohoori, N., Ashley, D., and Figueroa, P. The Jamaican Healthy Lifestyle Survey: Ministry of Health Jamaica. 2000.
[2] Wilks, R., Younger, N., Tulloch-Reid, M., et al. (2008). Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey 2007-2008 (JHLS II).
[3] The Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey Writing Team1 (2022) The Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey III (2016 – 2017) TECHNICAL REPORT Kingston, Jamaica

World Health Organization (WHO) Shared Risk Factors

The WHO highlights that there are five (5) main shared risk factors related to the development of NCDs[1]. These risk factors are the harmful use of alcohol, tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and indoor and outdoor air pollution. These contribute to the development of NCDs, and metabolic/physiological changes within the body.

[1] World Health Organization. Non-communicable Risk Factors [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.emro.who.int/noncommunicable-diseases/causes/risk-factors.html

World Health Organization (WHO) Shared Risk Factors

The harmful use of alcohol, is considered one of the shared risk factors for the development of NCDs[1].

These shared risk factors result in increased:

- Blood glucose levels (Diabetes)
- Blood pressure (Hypertension)
- Weight (Overweight/Obesity)
- Blood fat levels (hyperlipidemia)

[1] World Health Organization. Non-communicable Risk Factors [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.emro.who.int/noncommunicable-diseases/causes/risk-factors.html

Social Aspect of Alcohol

Alcohol is one of the most consumed substances worldwide with widespread social acceptance[1]. According to 2019 estimates by the WHO, alcohol consumption is a common dietary and entertainment habit, with an estimated 2.5 billion consumers worldwide[1,2].

Approximately

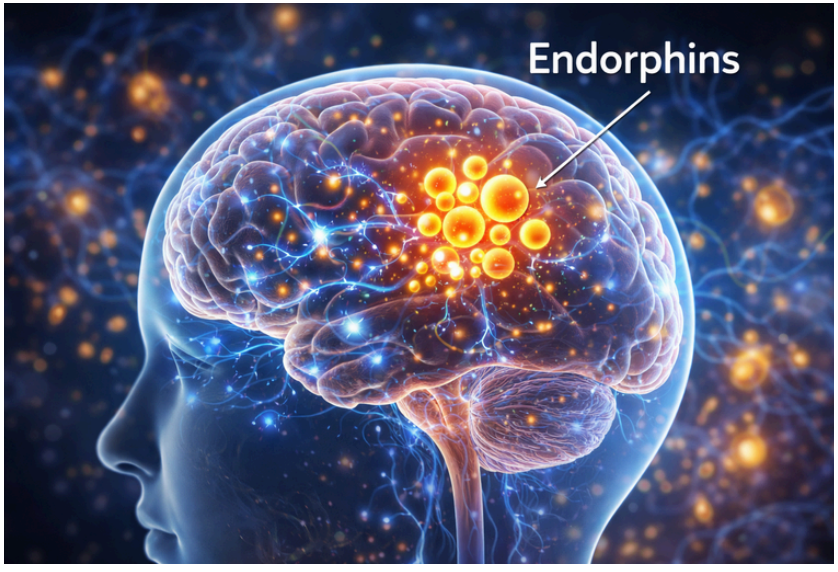
2.5 billion

consumers of alcohol worldwide

[1] Zhang X, Chen X, Yang J, Du L, Zhou Y, Li K. Meta-analysis of alcohol consumption and venous thromboembolism. J Public Health (Oxf). 2022 Aug 25;44(3):477-498. doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdab045.
[2] Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/32b161e9-5683-40f5-a1c3-1c92a76d5cda/content

Social Aspect of Alcohol

The main reason for alcohol's universal consumption is its ability to change how people feel, think and behave[1,2]. Alcohol helps to increase the sensation of well-being by triggering the release of chemicals such as endorphins and reduce feelings of anxiety[1]. Endorphin activation make us feel more relaxed[1].



[1] Dunbar RIM, Launay J, Wlodarski R, Robertson C, Pearce E, Carney J, MacCarron P. Functional Benefits of (Modest) Alcohol Consumption. Adapt Human Behav Physiol. 2017;3(2):118-133. doi: 10.1007/s40750-016-0058-4.
[2] Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/32b161e9-5683-40f5-a1c3-1c92a76d5cda/content

Social Aspect of Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is a part of the Jamaican culture, as it is consumed in everyday life and used during entertainment-based activities[1]. A 2018 Jamaican study, involving the secondary analysis of data from the Jamaica Household Survey (2016), showed that binge drinking differed by socioeconomic status among males and females. In persons aged 18-25 years, binge drinking was greatest among[1].

- Employed males
- Females with only pre-secondary education

Males (18-25 years): Binge drinking greatest among employed males

Females (18-25 years): Binge drinking greatest among females with only pre-secondary education

[1] Abel WD, Weaver S, Ricketts Roomes T, Agu CF, Smith PW, Oshi DC, Harrison J, Smith K, Mitchell G, Belinfante A, Rae T, Oshi SN. Risk Factors Associated with Frequent Alcohol Binge Drinking among Jamaicans: Does Gender Matter? Asian Pac J Cancer Prev. 2018 Apr 23;19(S1):39-44. doi: 10.22034/APJCP.2018.19.S1.39.

Cultural Linkages to Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol has a familiar association with the Caribbean region due to our colonial past and the plantation growth of sugar cane or “white gold”[1]. Countries such as Jamaica have historically produced a significant amount of sugarcane—a primary ingredient in the production of alcohol or over-proof rum[1]. Alcohol consumption and misuse in Jamaica went hand in hand with the plantation culture. This was due to enslaved Africans being given rum as compensation, leading to the use of rum in the diet and culture of Jamaican society[1].

[1] Smith M. When The Bough Breaks: Alcohol Misuse Among Jamaican Young Adults [Internet]. AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. 2023. Available from: https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/912

Introduction

Cultural Linkages to Alcohol Consumption

One of Jamaica's cultural and economic exports is its rum. Rum use is intertwined with the island's culture. Historically, rum has been used for varied purposes from medicinal use to festivities - dance, grave digging and "nine night" (dead yard)[1]. Bars are important social "watering holes" for Jamaicans[1].

[1] Smith M. When The Bough Breaks: Alcohol Misuse Among Jamaican Young Adults [Internet]. AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. 2023. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/912

Cultural Linkages to Alcohol Consumption

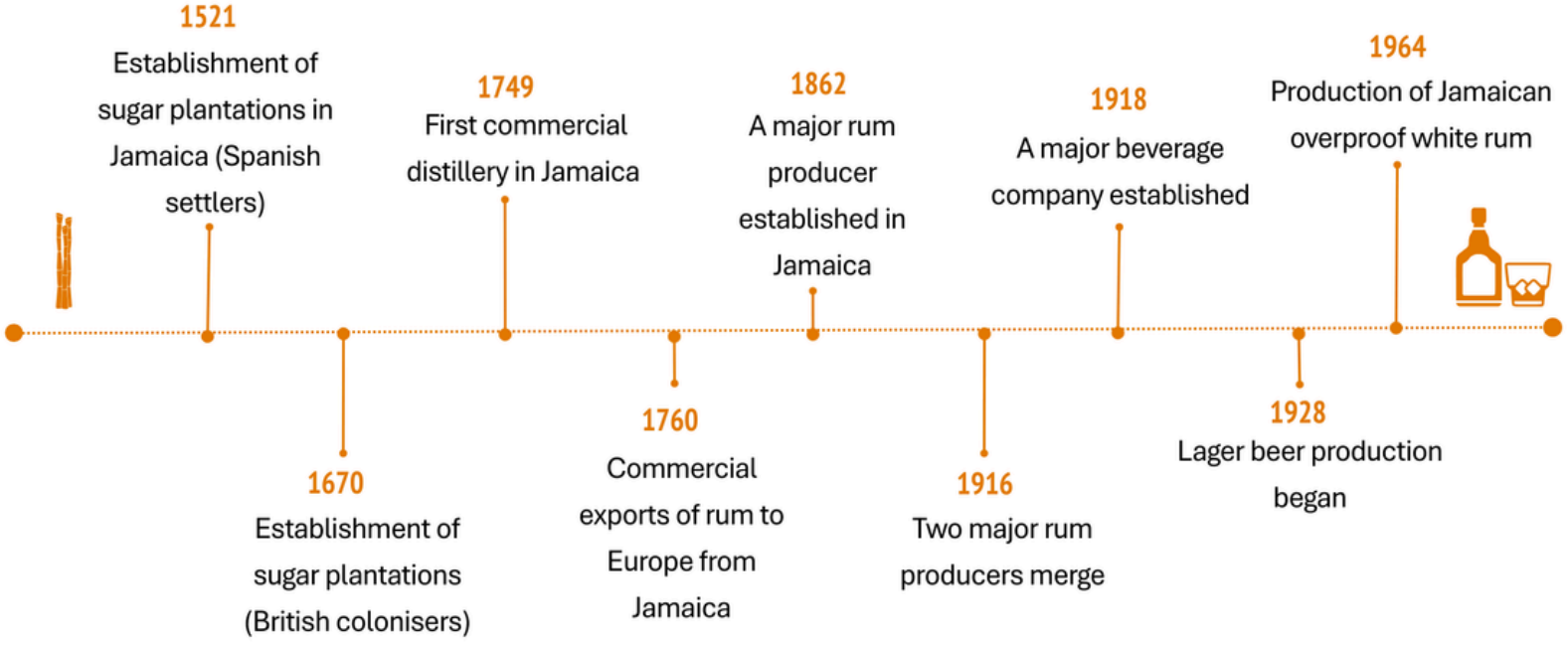
A 2010 study showed that alcohol use was ingrained into the sociocultural fabric of the Jamaican society at all class levels[1]. A 2022 quantitative self-report survey showed that drinking in Jamaica is related to both affluence and lack, with different patterns of drinking between the classes[2]. The consumption of alcohol was found to be acceptable by all classes regardless of social context[2]. All social classes believed that alcohol misuse was linked to socially unacceptable behaviours leading to criminality and negative health effects[2].

Class level and associated consumption setting of alcohol in Jamaica

Class Level	Consumption Setting
Affluent	In isolation or intimate settings and gatherings
Middle	Semi-formal social settings
Lower	Bars and informal social settings

[1] Comparative Analysis of Student Drug Use in Caribbean Countries A Report on Student Drug Use in 12 Caribbean Countries 2010 CICAD Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission Secretariat for Multidimensional Security [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://ncda.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/studentdrug.pdf
[2] Smith M. When The Bough Breaks: Alcohol Misuse Among Jamaican Young Adults [Internet]. AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. 2023. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/912

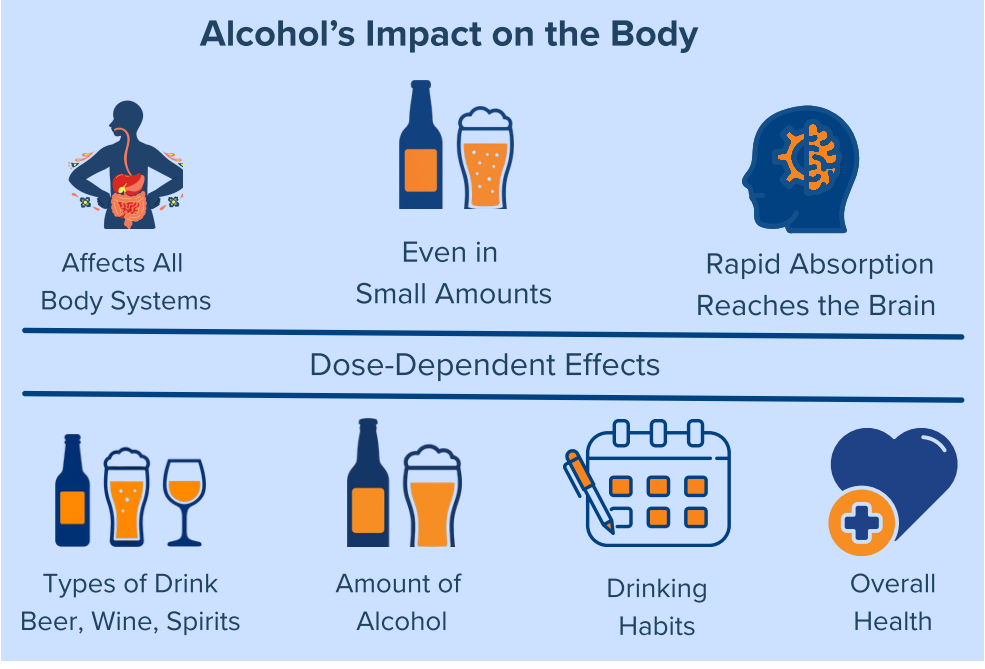
A Brief History of Alcohol Production in Jamaica



[1] Our Roots: Appleton Estate's Origin, History And Identity | Appleton Estate [Internet]. Appleton Estate - en-jm. 2025 [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://www.appletonestate.com/en-jm/roots/
[2] Red Stripe 100 Years of History - Red Stripe company [Internet]. www.redstripecorporate.com. Available from: https://www.redstripecorporate.com/our-history
{3} Jamaican rum: history, distilleries and brands : Whisky and Spirits Guides [Internet]. Thewhiskyexchange.com. 2025. Available from: https://www.thewhiskyexchange.com/inspiration/article/18298/jamaican-rum-history-distilleries-brands-the-whisky-exchange

Health Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol has a significant effect on the body and its systems, even in small amounts[1]. The consumption of alcohol presents a health risk to the drinker due to the ease of absorption, especially within the brain[1]. The effect of alcohol on the body depends on the volume of alcohol, the type of alcoholic drink (beer, wine or rum) along with the previous pattern of drinking and overall health[2].



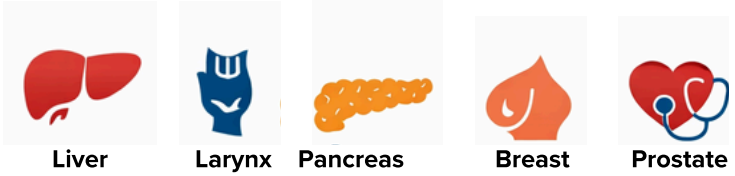
[1] Butts M, Sundaram VL, Murughiyan U, Borthakur A, Singh S. The Influence of Alcohol Consumption on Intestinal Nutrient Absorption: A Comprehensive Review. Nutrients. 2023 Mar 24;15(7):1571. doi: 10.3390/nu15071571.
[2] Chiva-Blanch G, Badimon L. Benefits and Risks of Moderate Alcohol Consumption on Cardiovascular Disease: Current Findings and Controversies. Nutrients. 2019 Dec 30;12(1):108. doi: 10.3390/nu12010108.

Health Effects of Alcohol

According to the WHO, alcohol and alcoholic beverages contain ethanol, which is an intoxicating psychoactive substance and carcinogen with dependence-producing properties[1]. The harmful use of alcohol causes over 200 diseases and unintentional injuries[1]. Effects of short-term alcohol use include injuries, violence, alcohol poisoning, sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies[2]. It is considered a risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease, digestive issues and mental health disorders, as well as a risk factor for several cancers such as cancers of the mouth, colorectal region, liver, larynx, pancreas, breast and prostate[3]. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy poses significant risks, as it may lead to malformation during gestation, and foetal alcohol syndrome[1].

Cardiovascular and digestive issues

Mental health disorders



Associated Cancers

[1] World Health Organisation. Alcohol: WHO; 2024. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Who.Int/News-Room/Fact-Sheets/Detail/Alcohol.
[2] U.S. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention. Alcohol Use And Your Health: CDC; 2025. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Cdc.Gov/Alcohol/About-Alcohol-Use/Index.Html.
[3] U.S. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention. Alcohol And Cancer: CDC; 2025. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Cdc.Gov/Cancer/Risk-Factors/Alcohol.Html

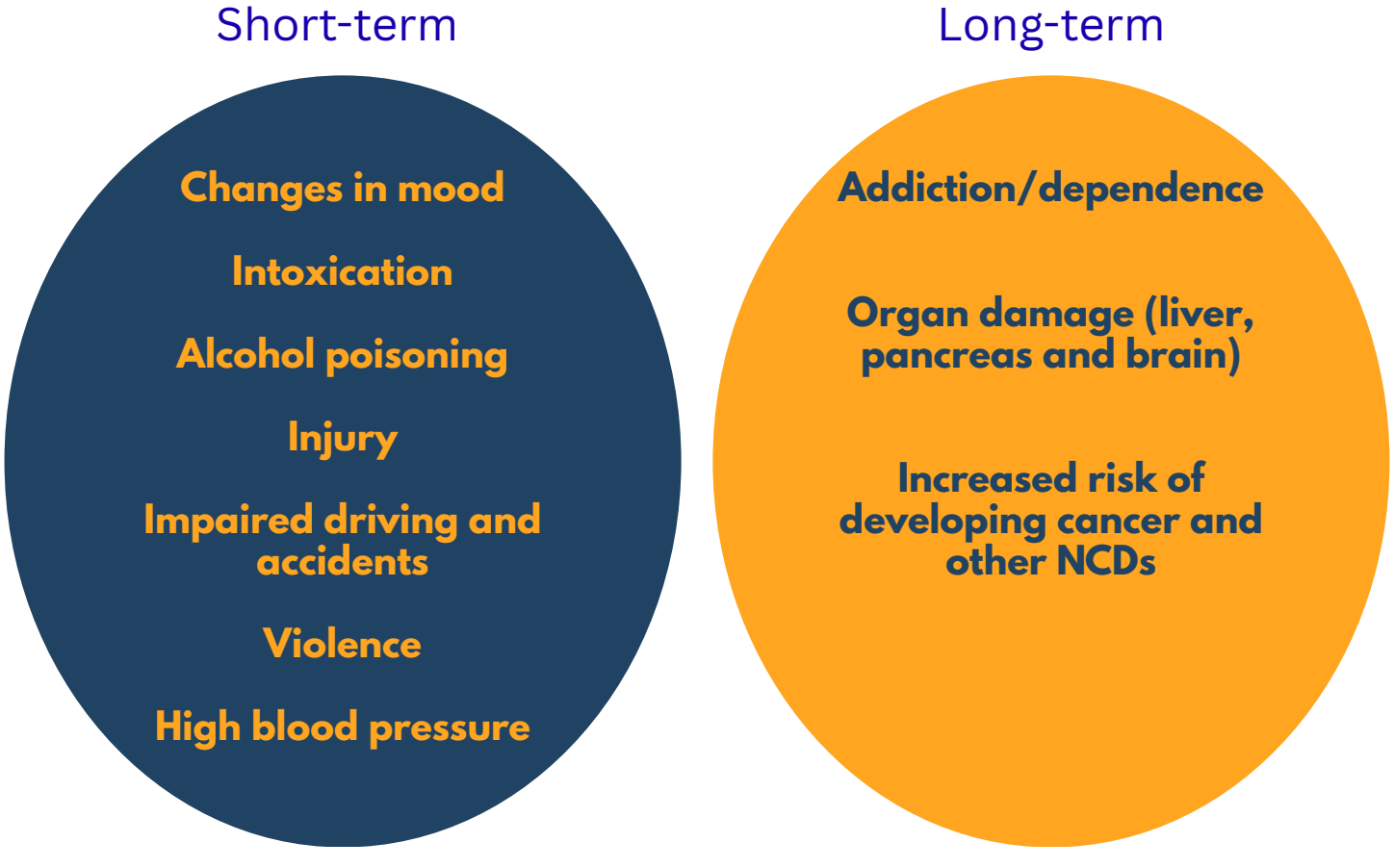
Health Effects of Alcohol

Globally, alcohol consumption contributes to approximately 2.6 million deaths annually. The harmful use of alcohol is a key risk factor for mortality worldwide and estimated to contribute to 1.5% of the global burden of disease[1].

Alcohol contributed to approximately 2.6 million annual deaths globally

[1] Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/32b161e9-5683-40f5-a1c3-1c92a76d5cda/content

Health Effects of Alcohol



[1] World Health Organisation. Alcohol: WHO; 2024. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Who.Int/News-Room/Fact-Sheets/Detail/Alcohol.
[2] U.S. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention. Alcohol Use And Your Health: CDC; 2025. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Cdc.Gov/Alcohol/About-Alcohol-Use/Index.Html.
[3] U.S. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention. Alcohol And Cancer: CDC; 2025. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Cdc.Gov/Cancer/Risk-Factors/Alcohol.Html

Alcohol Attributable Deaths

It was estimated that 3.0% of all deaths occurring in 2019 were attributable to alcohol[1]. Deaths from all causes that were attributable to alcohol were lower for Jamaica when compared with other countries. This trend was repeated for alcohol attributable deaths for cancer and road traffic crashes, with Jamaica having a lower proportion at 1.4% and 24.6% respectively[1].

Alcohol contributed to approximately 550 deaths in Jamaica (2019)

[1] Alcohol-attributable fractions, all-cause deaths (%) [Internet]. www.who.int. [cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-attributable-fractions-all-cause-deaths-(-)

Alcohol Attributable Deaths

Alcohol attributable deaths (all causes) in selected countries, 2019

Country	Age	All Causes (%)		
		Men	Women	Total
Barbados	All Ages	6.3	0.8	3.5
Canada	All Ages	7.3	2.1	4.7
Jamaica	**All Ages**	**4.7**	**0.9**	**3.0**
Trinidad and Tobago	All Ages	6.2	0.9	4.0
United Kingdom	All Ages	6.1	1.9	4.0
United States of America	All Ages	7.8	2.3	5.1

[1] Alcohol-attributable fractions, all-cause deaths (%) [Internet]. www.who.int. [cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-attributable-fractions-all-cause-deaths-(-)

Alcohol Attributable Deaths

Alcohol attributable deaths from cancer, 2019

Country	Age	Cancer (%)		
		Men	Women	Total
Barbados	All Ages	5.7	2.4	4.1
Canada	All Ages	7.5	2.4	5.1
Jamaica	**All Ages**	**1.8**	**0.8**	**1.4**
Trinidad and Tobago	All Ages	3.6	1.8	2.8
United Kingdom	All Ages	7.4	3.0	5.4
United States of America	All Ages	7.2	2.4	4.9

[1] Alcohol-attributable fractions, all-cause deaths (%) [Internet]. www.who.int. [cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-attributable-fractions-all-cause-deaths-(-)

Alcohol Attributable Deaths

The WHO figures (2019) for alcohol attributable road traffic crash deaths indicate that Jamaica has a lower mortality rate than our Caribbean neighbors and developed countries. Jamaica has an overall proportion of 24.6% alcohol attributable road traffic crash deaths with males at 26.3% and females at 20.7%[1].

Alcohol attributable deaths from road traffic crashes, 2019

Country	Age	Road Traffic Crashes (%)		
		Men	Women	Total
Barbados	All Ages	45.0	36.8	42.9
Canada	All Ages	39.2	26.7	35.1
Jamaica	**All Ages**	**26.3**	**20.7**	**24.6**
Trinidad and Tobago	All Ages	32.3	23.6	30.6
United Kingdom	All Ages	42.6	33.0	40.1
United States of America	All Ages	42.6	29.6	38.7

[1] Alcohol-attributable fractions, all-cause deaths (%) [Internet]. www.who.int. [cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/alcohol-attributable-fractions-all-cause-deaths-(-)

Alcohol and Road Traffic Crashes in Jamaica

Alcohol can impair drivers when operating a motor vehicle[1]. It inhibits cognition and brain function even in small amounts and can lead to drivers experiencing poor coordination, concentration and a reduction in risk assessment[2]. Alcohol impaired driving is termed driving under the influence of alcohol (DUIA)[1].

[1] Lalwani K, Sewell C, Frazier G, et al. Drunk driving: a secondary analysis of factors associated with driving under the influence of alcohol in Jamaica. BMJ Open 2023;13:e073529. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2023-073529
[2] The SAFER technical package: five areas of intervention at national and subnational levels. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/initiatives/SAFER/drink-driving

Alcohol and Road Traffic Crashes in Jamaica

Road traffic crashes are a significant public health problem resulting in death, disability, other life altering injuries and anxiety[1]. Throughout the world, road traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among people aged 15-29 years[1].

Drivers who are impaired by alcohol have a higher risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident[2]. Additionally, DUIA when combined with high speed and poor road design, may result in more frequent road traffic crashes and more severe outcomes[2]. Motor vehicle accidents not only affect the driver but also passengers, pedestrians and bystanders[2].

[1] The SAFER technical package: five areas of intervention at national and subnational levels. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/initiatives/SAFER/drink-driving
{2} Lalwani K, Sewell C, Frazier G, Abel W. Drunk driving: a secondary analysis of factors associated with driving under the influence of alcohol in Jamaica. BMJ Open. 2023 Jul 12;13(7):e073529. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-073529.

Alcohol and Road Traffic Crashes in Jamaica

Early research work in Jamaica highlighted that there was an association between victims of vehicular accidents and a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in excess of the legal limit of 0.08 g/dL. However, research also indicates that a BAC of 0.05 g/dL increased the risk of a driver being involved in a road traffic accident. Jamaica's current national legislation endorses a BAC limit of ≤0.08 g/dL for both general and young/first-time drivers[1].

Jamaica has a BAC limit of ≤0.08 g/dL

[1] Lalwani K, Sewell C, Frazier G, Abel W. Drunk driving: a secondary analysis of factors associated with driving under the influence of alcohol in Jamaica. BMJ Open. 2023 Jul 12;13(7):e073529. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-073529.

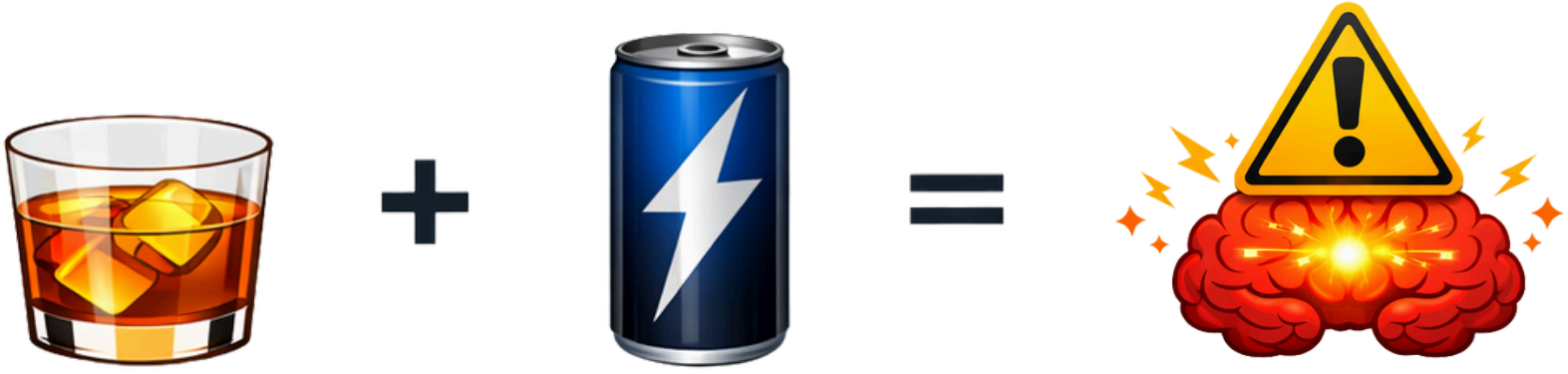
Energy Drinks and Alcohol

Energy drinks (EDs) usually contain carbonated water, caffeine, and other additives or chemicals that boost energy and mental performance[1]. The consumption of energy drinks among adolescents has increased rapidly in recent years[1]. A study from Norway estimated that in 2019, 30% of adolescents consumed EDs at least once a week[1]. Energy drinks are considered to be the most widely consumed non-alcoholic beverage worldwide[2]. The consumption of EDs have been linked to adverse health effects such as those affecting the cardiovascular system[2]. It is suggested that the consumption of EDs put adolescents at risk for alcohol use[1]. European consumer surveys indicated that respondents reported that EDs mixed well with alcohol[2]. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States of America has banned the mixing of alcohol with EDs[3].

[1] Dobrek L. The Review on Adverse Effects of Energy Drinks and Their Potential Drug Interactions. Nutrients. 2025 Jul 25;17(15):2435. doi: 10.3390/nu17152435.
[2] Brunborg GS, Raninen J, Burdzovic Andreas J. Energy drinks and alcohol use among adolescents: A longitudinal study. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2022 Dec 1;241:109666. doi: 10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2022.109666.
[3] Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. Caffeinated Alcoholic Beverages [Internet]. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. 2019. [cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/caffeinated-alcoholic-beverages

Energy Drinks and Alcohol

In the local context, it is a common practice to mix energy drinks and alcohol. For Jamaica, no formal data sources are available, however, anecdotal evidence suggests widespread use across all social classes. "Special" is the common name for the mix of energy drinks and alcohol in communities. The acceptance of this practice is reflected in popular songs[1].



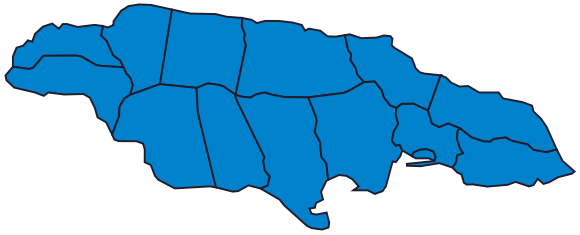
Alcohol **Energy drink** **Altered reward system**

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol

According to the World Bank, Jamaicans consumed approximately 3.1 L of alcohol per capita (2020), while the global per capita consumption is approximately 4.9 L for persons 15 years and older[1].



VS

3.1 L
Per capita

4.9 L
Per capita

[1] Alcohol consumption per person [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/total-alcohol-consumption-per-capita-litres-of-pure-alcohol

Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol

There was a decrease in the per capita consumption of alcohol for Jamaica over the period 2000 to 2020 from 3.3 to 3.1 litres. This trend was in keeping with the overall decrease in the average for Latin America and the Caribbean from 6.8 (2000) to 5.8 (2020). Jamaica's per capita consumption is relatively low, with data indicating that the average alcohol consumption is only lower in some low and middle income countries and those with alcohol bans (11 countries)[1].

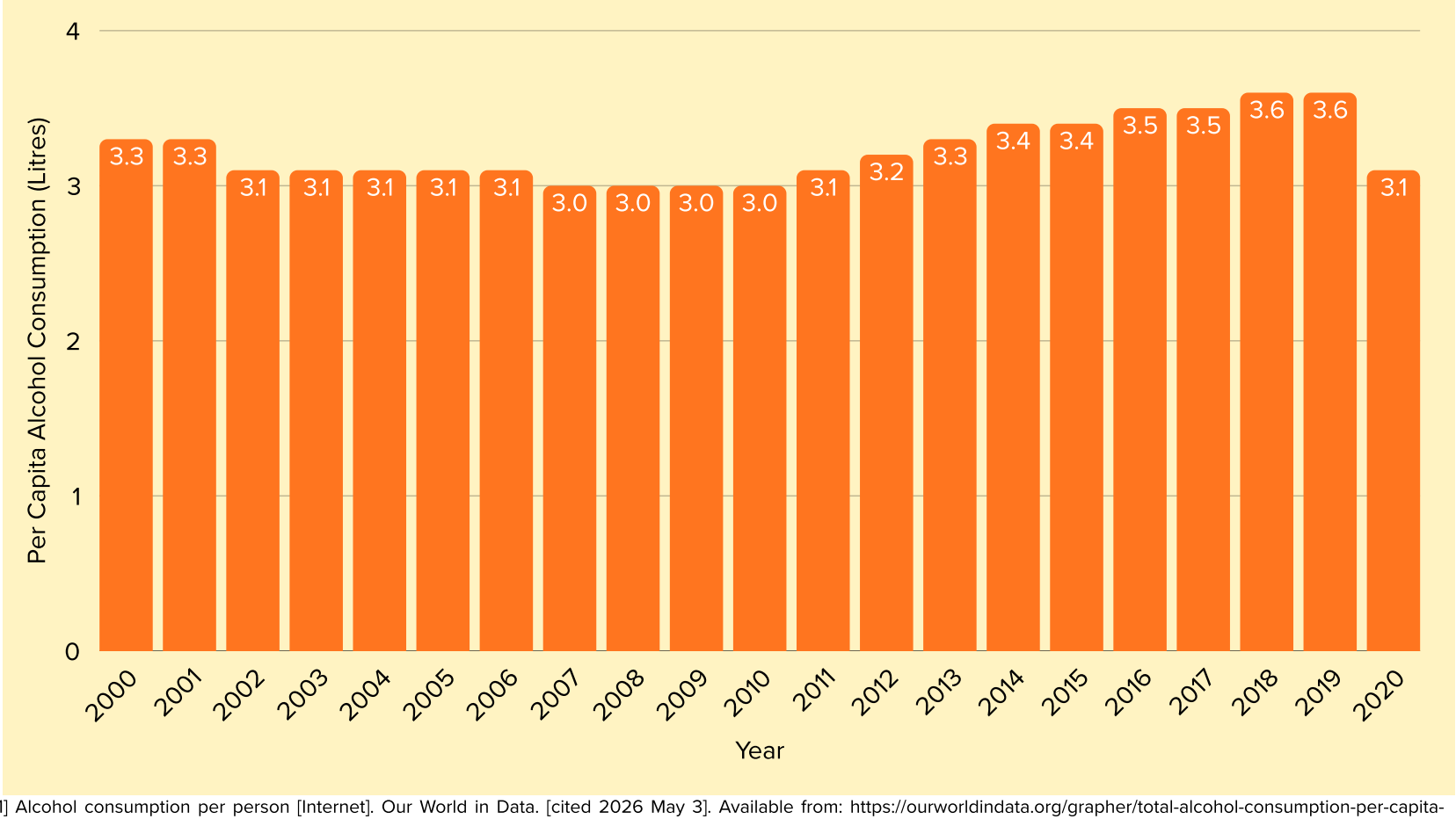
Per capita alcohol consumption, 2000 and 2020

Country	Per Capita Consumption of Alcohol /L (>15 years)		Change
	2000	**2020**	
Jamaica	**3.3**	**3.1**	Decrease ▼
Latin America and the Caribbean	6.8	5.8	Decrease ▼
High Income Countries	10.7	9.2	Decrease ▼
Upper Middle Income Countries	4.2	4.4	Increase ▲
Lower Middle Income Countries	2.4	3.5	Increase ▲

[1] Alcohol consumption per person [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/total-alcohol-consumption-per-capita-litres-of-pure-alcohol

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

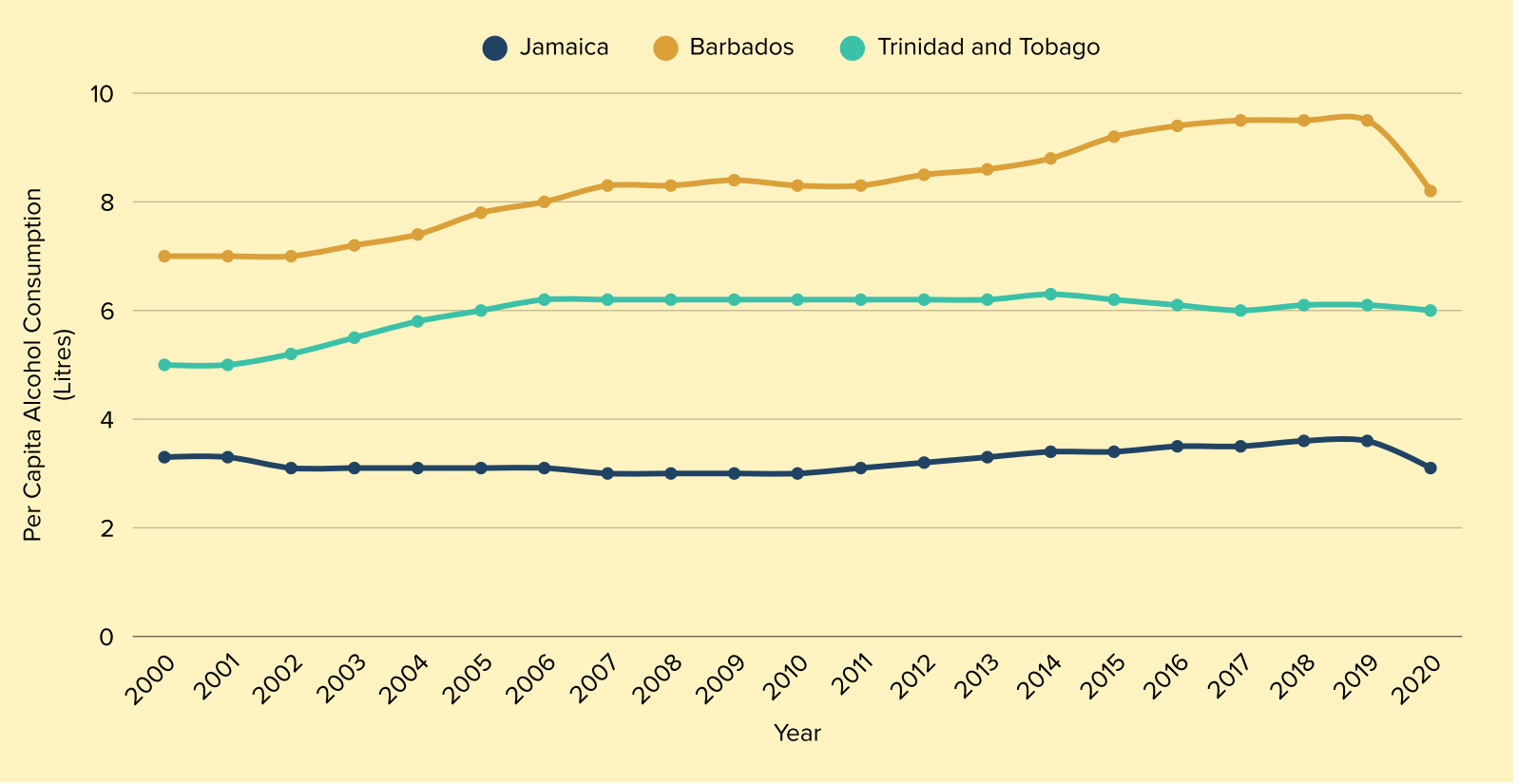
Per Capita Alcohol Consumption in Jamaica (2000 - 2020)



[1] Alcohol consumption per person [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/total-alcohol-consumption-per-capita-litres-of-pure-alcohol

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

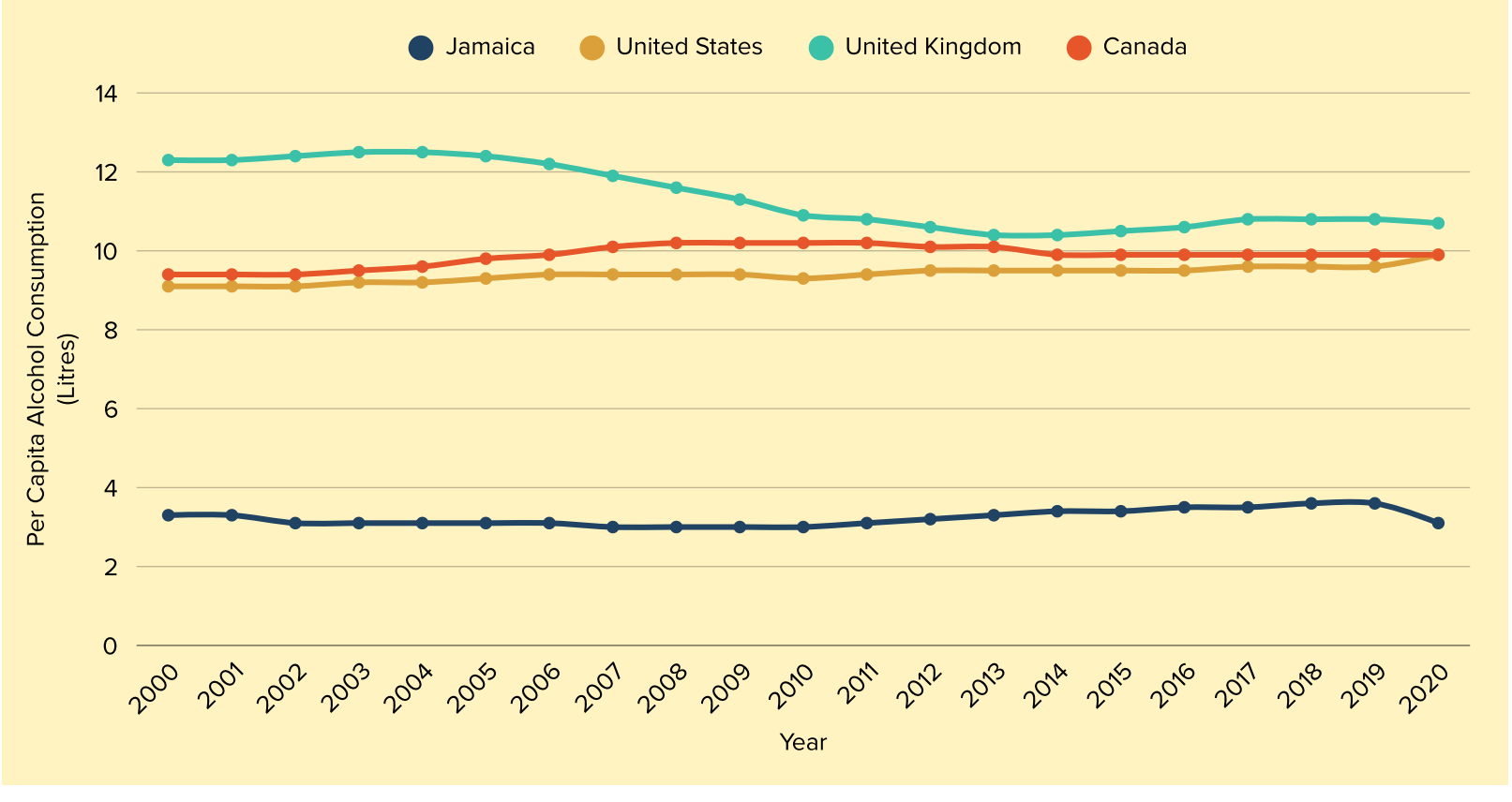
Per Capita Alcohol Consumption in Select Caribbean Countries (2000 - 2020)



[1] Alcohol consumption per person [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/total-alcohol-consumption-per-capita-litres-of-pure-alcohol

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Per Capita Alcohol Consumption in Jamaica and Select High Income Countries (2000 - 2020)

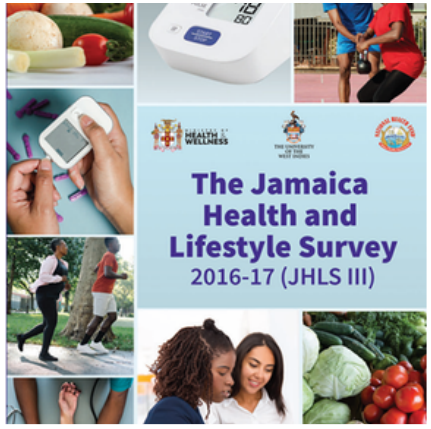


[1] Alcohol consumption per person [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2026 May 3]. Available from: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/total-alcohol-consumption-per-capita-litres-of-pure-alcohol

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Data on local alcohol consumption were derived from the following population-based or nationally representative surveys:

a) The Global School Health Survey 2010 and 2017
b) The Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey 2016-17
c) The Jamaica National Drug Prevalence Survey 2016 and 2023



Alcohol Use In Jamaica

An assessment of the data from the 2016 and 2023 National Drug Prevalence Survey shows an overall increase in all usage patterns of alcohol for Jamaica. Current, past and lifetime use increased by 9.7%, 6.7% and 3.5% respectively[1].

Alcohol consumption in Jamaica, 2016 and 2023

Usage	2016 (%)	2023 (%)
Current	42.1	▲ 46.2
Past	56.8	▲ 60.6
Lifetime	74.8	▲ 77.4

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Current Alcohol Use

In 2023, almost one in two (46.2%) Jamaicans aged 15 years and older reported current alcohol use[1]. While three out of five (60.6%) Jamaicans had consumed alcohol in the past year and seven out of ten (77%) Jamaicans were lifetime consumers of alcohol. One out of four Jamaicans (25.2%) had never used alcohol. Males consumed more alcohol than females for current, past year and lifetime users[1].

Alcohol consumption in Jamaica, 2023

Usage	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Current	59.9	32.7	**46.2**
Past	70.0	48.3	**60.6**
Lifetime	83.4	71.3	**77.4**

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Current Alcohol Use

In general, alcohol consumption increased with increasing age for both males and females. Current alcohol use was highest in the 18-24 years age group for females and 25-34 years age group for males.

Alcohol consumption in Jamaica by age and sex, 2023

	Age Group (Years)								
Usage	**12-14**	**15-17**	**Y12-17**	**18-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-65**	**Total (%)**
Females									
Current	9.7	23.2	17.6	44.1	39.7	36.2	31.9	15.4	**32.7**
Past	27.9	51.3	41.6	56.6	59.9	50.0	43.2	24.7	**48.3**
Lifetime	34.3	64.6	52.0	75.1	81.8	76.5	74.9	57.1	**71.3**
Males									
Current	3.8	29.6	21.1	56.9	77.8	75.3	66.0	57.5	**59.9**
Past	14.7	55.3	41.8	74.7	86.2	84.5	77.7	68.2	**73.0**
Lifetime	34.4	65.2	55.0	84.2	91.1	91.5	90.9	88.4	**83.5**

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

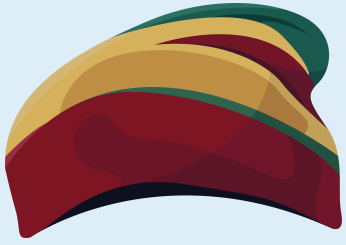
Current Alcohol Use

Jamaicans of all ethnicities consumed similar amounts of alcohol. Overall, males 15 years and older consumed more alcohol than females. Current alcohol use was highest among employed Jamaicans, married couples, those who identified as Rastafarians and those who achieved post-secondary education[1].

Current alcohol use was highest in:

Employed

Married couples



Rastafarians

Post-Secondary Education

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Current Alcohol Use:

Race

46.0%
black persons

49.7%
other races

Employment status

56.0%
employed persons

35.7%
unemployed persons

22.9%
students

36.0%
retired/independent

Marital status

45.1%
singles

49.6%
married couples

40.5%
divorced/separated

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Current Alcohol Use:

Occupation category

36.9%
professionals

48.2%
highly skilled persons

45.7%
skilled workers

49.0%
unskilled persons

51.7%
unemployed persons

23.8%
members of armed forces

Education level

31.8%
persons with primary education or lower

46.7%
persons with secondary education

49.6%
persons with post-secondary/tertiary education

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Current Alcohol Use:

Monthly income

<$50,000	$50,001 - $100,00	> $100,001 - $180,000	>$180,000	Don't know/ No response
43.8%	49.7%	47.8%	54.3%	30.8%

Religion

40.2%
Christians

66.8%
Rastafarians

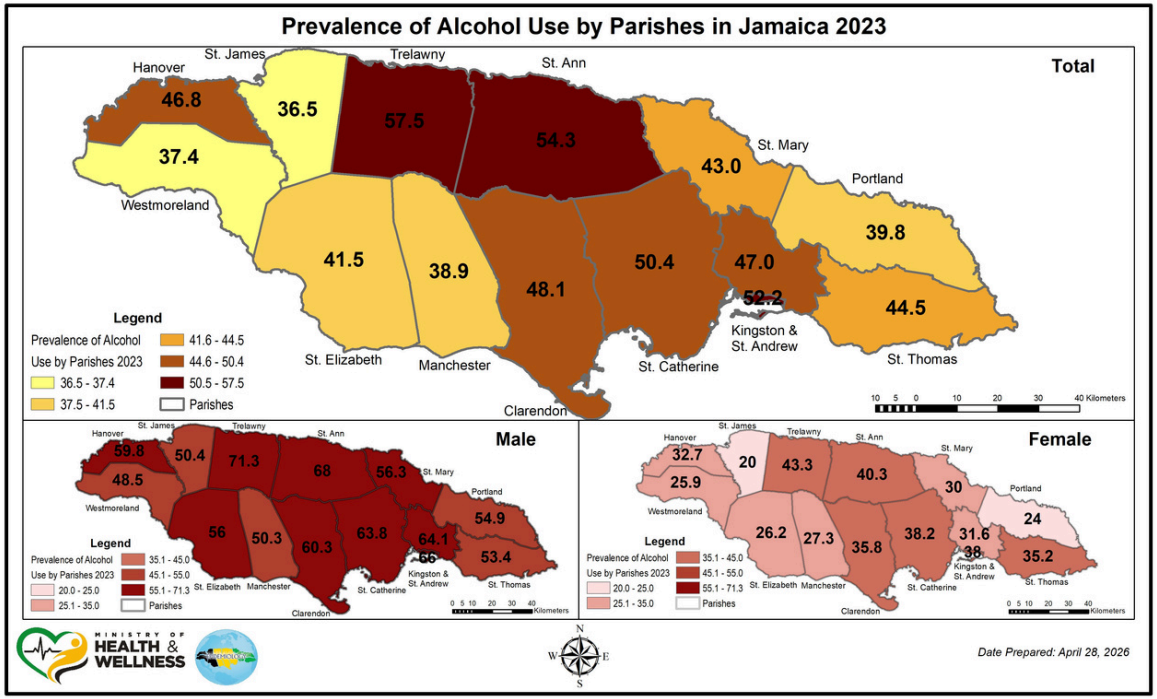
49.2%
non-christians /other religious affiliations

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Current Alcohol Use

Current alcohol use was highest in the parishes of Trelawny, St. Ann and Kingston and St. Andrew with proportions greater than 50%. Additionally, St. Catherine's figure was greater than 50% at 50.4%; while the lowest proportion of current alcohol use was found in St. James at 36.5%[1].



[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Alcohol Use in Students (13-17 years)

The Global School Health Survey (GSHS), 2017 found that approximately one in two (48.9%) adolescents aged 13-17 years reported current use of alcohol. Current alcohol use was 45.1% in 13-15 year-olds, and 53.7% in 16-17 year-olds. Notably, there was a 14.1% decline in current alcohol use among 13–15 year-olds between 2010 and 2017. Over the same period, adolescent females 13-15 years experienced a larger decrease of 23.3% compared to males with a 5.0% decrease.

Current alcohol use in Jamaican schools, 2010 - 2017

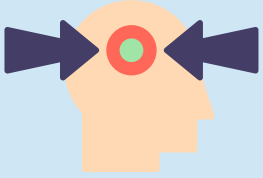
Age (Years)	Years	Male	Female	Total
13-15	2010 [1]	57.8	47.1	52.5
13-15	2017 [2]	54.8	36.1	45.1
13-17	2017 [2]	58.7	39.9	48.9
16-17	2017 [2]	63.3	44.9	53.7

[1] Survey - Global School-Based Student Health Survey - Jamaica 2010 - National Council on Drug Abuse [Internet]. National Council on Drug Abuse. 2020 [cited 2026 May 1]. Available from: https://ncda.org.jm/publications/surveys/survey-global-school-based-student-health-survey-jamaica-2010/
[2] Jamaica - Global School-Based Student Health Survey 2017 [Internet]. extranet.who.int. [cited 2026 May 1] Available from: https://extranet.who.int/ncdsmicrodata/index.php/catalog/644

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Alcohol Use in Students (13-17 years)

Students' Alcohol Perception - 2018 [1]



Frequently Drinking Alcohol

Slightly harmful

Very harmful

Students who perceived frequently drinking alcohol as slightly harmful were **44.0%** more likely to drink alcohol than those who perceived it as very harmful.

Getting Drunk

Slightly harmful

Very harmful

Students who perceived getting drunk as slightly harmful were **38.0%** more likely to drink alcohol than those who perceived it as very harmful.

[1] Oshi, S. N, Abel, W. D., Ricketts-Roomes, T., Meka, I. A, Harrison, J., Weaver, S., Agu, C. F., Whitehorne-Smith, P., Omeje, J., Rae, T., Oshi, D. C. Does Risk Perception Affect Alcohol Consumption among Secondary School Students in Jamaica?. Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention, 2018; 19(S1): 13-18. doi: 10.22034/APJCP.2018.19.S1.13

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Alcohol Use in Students (13-17 years)

In 2023, the average age for initiation of alcohol consumption in Jamaica was at **16.7** years. On average, males started consuming alcohol 2 years before females[1].

Males began drinking at
15.6 years

Females began drinking at
17.8 years

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Summary of Current Alcohol Use in Jamaica

The table below highlights the current alcohol use from population based surveys from 2010-2023. Across all surveys, males consumed more alcohol than females.

Current alcohol consumption for Jamaicans 13 - 65 years, 2010-2023

Age (Years)	Year	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
13-15	2010 [1]	52.5	57.8	47.1
13-15	2017 [1]	45.1	54.8	36.1
16-17	2017 [1]	53.7	63.3	44.9
13-17	2017 [1]	48.9	58.7	39.9
15-74	2000 [2]	NA	78.0	50.6
15-74	2008 [2]	64.3	80.1	49.2
15-74	2017 [2]	41.7	58.3	25.0
12-65	2016 [3]	42.1	56.6	27.9
12-65	2023 [4]	46.2	59.9	32.7

[1]Global School Health Survey, 2017; [2] Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey, 2016-17; [3] National Drug Prevalence Survey, 2016; [4] National Drug Prevalence Survey, 2023
Younger-Coleman N., Cumberbatch C., Campbell J., Ebanks C., Williams D., O'Meally V. (2017) Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2016 - TECHNICAL REPORT For the OAS/CICAD & NCDA. Kingston, Jamaica

Harmful Use of Alcohol

The misuse and over consumption of alcohol can be categorized as heavy episodic (HE) alcohol use, binge drinking and harmful use. The table below highlights the categories captured from the 2016 and 2023 National Drug Prevalence Survey (NDPS), and the JHLS III 2017. Overall, the harmful use of alcohol and binge drinking have decreased in the general population.

Alcohol misuse for Jamaicans aged 15 years and older, 2016, 2017 and 2023

Gender	NDPS 2016		NDPS 2023		JHLS III 2017	
	Harmful Use	Binge Drinking	Harmful Use	Binge Drinking	HE Alcohol Use	Binge Drinking
Male	22.9	20.9	22.7	8.7	13.0	13.8
Female	9.9	9.5	8.9	3.3	3.4	3.5
Total	**16.3**	**15.1**	**15.7**	**6.5**	**8.1**	**8.5**

[1] Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey, 2016-17; [2] National Drug Prevalence Survey, 2016; [3] National Drug Prevalence Survey, 2023

Harmful Use of Alcohol

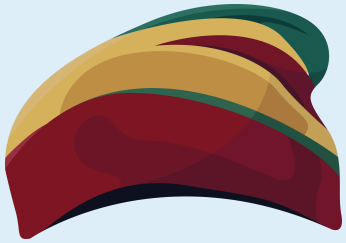
An examination of the sociodemographic factors that may have influenced the harmful use of alcohol by Jamaicans indicates that this practice is concentrated in the male population. The Kingston Metropolitan Area reported a higher incidence of harmful alcohol use (27.3%) compared to rural areas (21.3%). This habit was highest in persons of black ethnicity (15.8%), the employed (19.2%), single Jamaicans (16.7%) and Rastafarians (33%)[1].

Harmful alcohol use was highest in:

Black ethnicity

Singles

Employed



Rastafarians

Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Harmful Alcohol Use:

Race

15.8%
black persons

15.0%
other races

Employment status

19.2%
employed persons

12.4%
unemployed persons

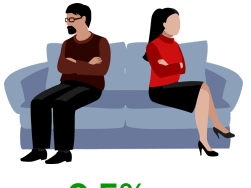
7.4%
students

10.2%
retired/independent

Marital status

16.7%
singles

13.4
married couples



9.5%
divorced/separated

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Harmful Alcohol Use:

Occupation category

14.0%
professionals

16.8%
highly skilled persons

21.3%
skilled workers

16.9%
unskilled persons

15.3%
unemployed persons

10.0%
members of armed forces

Education level

13.8%
persons with primary education or lower

17.1%
persons with secondary education

10.3%
persons with post-secondary/tertiary education

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Harmful Alcohol Use:

Monthly income

<$50,000	$50,001 - $100,00	> $100,001 - $180,000	>$180,000	Don't know/ No response
13.5%	19.5%	18.7%	11.3%	9.4%

Religion

11.0%
Christians

33.0%
Rastafarians

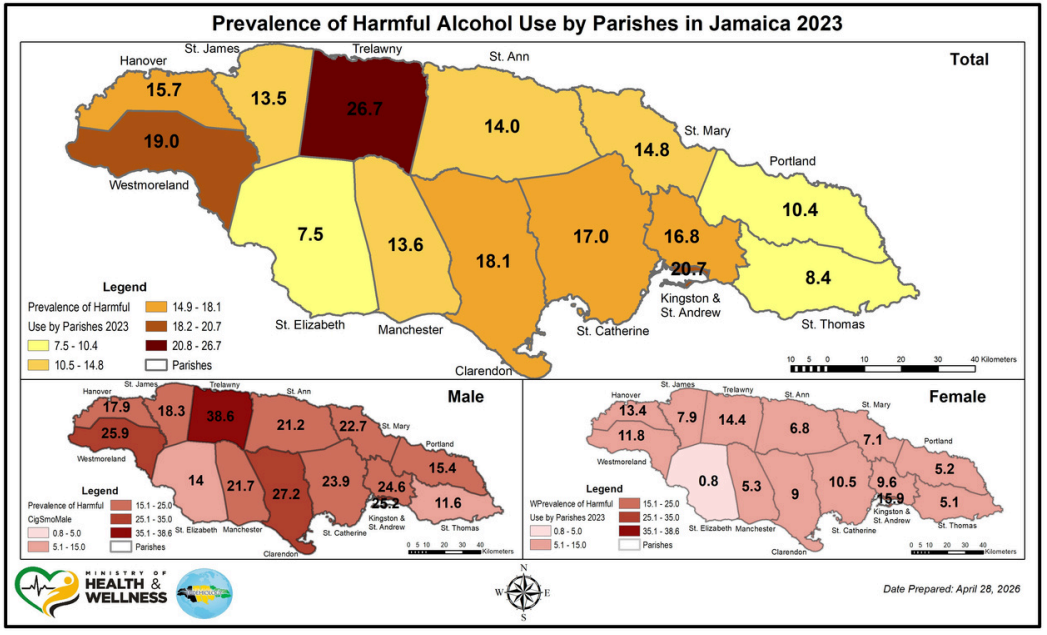
4.8%
non-christians /other religious affiliations

[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Alcohol Use In Jamaica

Harmful Use of Alcohol

The highest proportion of harmful use was recorded in the parish of Trelawny, followed by Kingston and St. Andrew and Westmoreland. These parishes were higher than the national average of 15.7%. The parish with the lowest proportion of harmful use was St. Elizabeth at 7.5%[1].



[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Polysubstance Use

Alcohol is often consumed with other substances. An analysis of the 2016 Jamaica Drug Prevalence Survey data indicated that men were 3 times more likely than women to consume alcohol with other substances such as tobacco and marijuana. Alcohol and marijuana were the most frequently combined substances[1].

Polysubstance use in Jamaica, 2016

Combination Polysubstance Use	Past Month (%)	Past Year (%)
Alcohol + Marijuana	15.4	12.9
Alcohol + Tobacco	9.1	10.9
Tobacco + Marijuana	7.7	8.8
Alcohol + Tobacco + Marijuana	6.9	8.2

[1] Lalwani K, Whitehorne-Smith P, Walcott G, McLeary JG, Mitchell G, Abel W. Prevalence and sociodemographic factors associated with polysubstance use: analysis of a population-based survey in Jamaica. BMC Psychiatry. 2022 Jul 29;22(1).

Road Traffic Crashes

In 2022, road traffic crashes were the leading cause of deaths from unintentional injuries (68.3%) in Jamaica. It was the leading cause of death in children (0-14 years), young adults (20-34 years) and the elderly (60+ years)[1].

Deaths from road traffic crashes in Jamaica, 2006 and 2022

Vulnerable Group	Number of deaths (2006)	Number of deaths (2022)
Children (0-14 years)	31	▼ 12
Young adults (20-34 years)	91	▲ 155
Elderly (60+ years)	46	▲ 53

[1] Ministry of Health and wellness. VITALS: A Quarterly Report, 2025-Injuries-Intentional and Unintentional injuries in the Jamaican Population: Calculated from RGD line list 2006-2012 & 2015-2022, 2013 and 2014

Road Traffic Crashes and Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

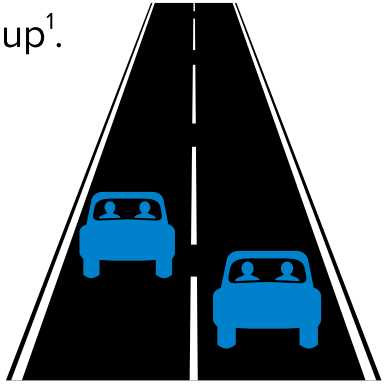
In 2020, approximately 20% of road traffic crashes were estimated to be due to DUIA[1]. A secondary analysis of the 2016 Jamaica Drug Prevalence Survey data highlighted that 18% of Jamaicans had driven under the influence of alcohol[2]. The total proportion of Jamaicans driving under the influence of alcohol for 2023 was self reported at 17.5%, with 2.3% being involved in accidents[3]. Almost one in four (23.5%) males reported driving while intoxicated with alcohol compared to 5.2% for females[3].

[1] Health at a glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020. Heal a Glance Lat Am Caribb 2020. [Internet]. [cited 2026 May 1]. Available from https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2020/06/health-at-a-glance-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-2020_4f138987/6089164f-en.pdf
[2] Lalwani K, Sewell C, Frazier G, Abel W. Drunk driving: a secondary analysis of factors associated with driving under the influence of alcohol in Jamaica. BMJ Open. 2023 Jul 12;13(7):e073529. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-073529.
[3] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

The age group breakdown of Jamaicans aged 12-65 years (NDPS, 2023) who had driven under the influence of alcohol (DUIA) in the past year revealed a higher proportion for males when compared with females. For males, the proportion of alcohol-impaired driving was highest in the 25-34 years age group at 32.3%, followed by 28.8% for males 35-44 years and similar proportions of 18.6% and 18.8% for the 18-24 years and 45-54 years age groups respectively[1].

Jamaican females in the 45-54 years age group had the greatest proportion for females DUIA at 13.8% followed by the 25-34 years age group at 6.3%, 2.4% for the 35-44 years age group and 1.8% for the 18-24 years age group[1].



[1] Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

Age-specific distribution of Jamaicans (12-65 years) who were DUIA in the past 12 months (NDPS), 2023

Gender	Age Group (%)								
	12-14	15-17	Y12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-65	Total
Male	0	12.1	11.1	18.6	32.3	28.8	18.8	14.0	23.5
Female	0	0	0	1.8	6.3	2.4	13.8	-	5.2
Both	0	10.0	8.1	13.1	22.7	19.9	17.2	11.2	17.5

Waller, L., Johnson, S., Daley, G., & Reid, H. (2024). Jamaica National Drug Use Prevalence Survey 2023 – Technical Report for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica, and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Kingston, Jamaica.

WHO Best Buys and Other Recommended Interventions

The WHO, through its “Best Buy” interventions, supports a multi-pronged approach with cost-effective policy actions. Best buys are cost effective evidence based interventions for combatting non-communicable diseases. The policy options range from individual therapeutic services to community and population level interventions. The three best buys related to alcohol consumption are[1]:

1. Increasing alcohol beverage excise taxes
2. Restricting access to retailed alcoholic beverages
3. Comprehensive advertising, promotion and sponsorship bans

Measures that curb the affordability, availability and accessibility of alcohol are said to be the most cost-effective.

[1] Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: World Health Organisation. Alcohol: WHO; 2024. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available From: Https://Www.Who.Int/News-Room/Fact-Sheets/Detail/Alcohol.

Global Response-Alcohol Action Plan

The WHOs Global Alcohol Action Plan (2022–2030) aims to lessen the harmful use of alcohol through operative, evidence-based plans at the national, regional and global levels[1]. This plan outlines six (6) key areas for action:

1. Implementation of high-impact strategies and interventions
2. Advocacy, awareness and commitment
3. Partnership, dialogue and coordination
4. Technical support and capacity-building
5. Knowledge production and information systems
6. Resource mobilization

[1] Global alcohol action plan 2022–2030. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240090101

Global Response-SAFER Initiative

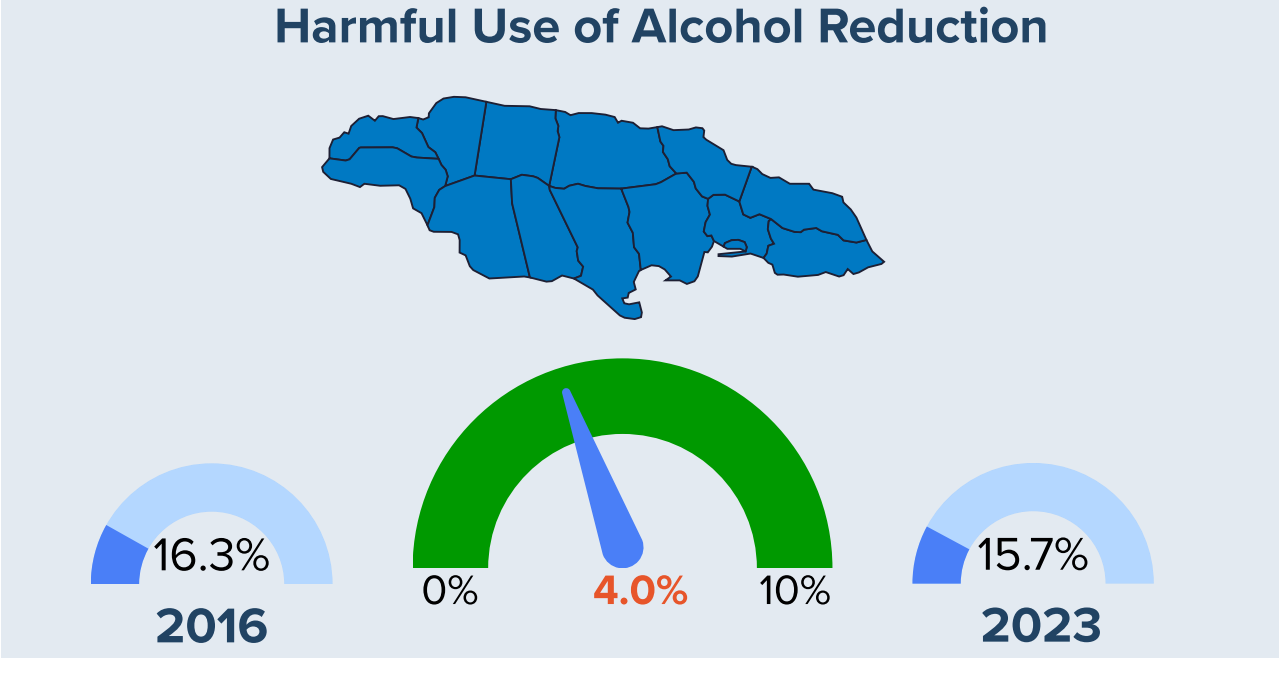
The WHO has a goal of reducing the harmful use of alcohol by 10% by 2030. This WHO goal is governed by the SAFER initiative and technical package. The initiative outlines five (5) high-impact strategies that can assist governments to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol use and the related health and socioeconomic consequences. The WHO-led initiative aims to support member states in achieving this goal[1].

S	A	F	E	R
Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability	**Advance** & enforce drink driving counter-measures	**Facilitate** access to screening, brief interventions & treatment	**Enforce** bans/ comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship & promotion.	**Raise** prices on alcohol through excise taxes & pricing policies

[1] The SAFER technical package: five areas of intervention at national and subnational levels. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://www.who.int/initiatives/SAFER/drink-driving

Jamaica's Progress on SAFER Initiative

The WHO goal is to reduce the harmful use of alcohol by 10% by 2030 through the SAFER Initiative. Jamaica's adoption of the SAFER initiative has aided in the reduction of alcohol's harm. In Jamaica, there was a 4.0% decrease in the harmful use of alcohol over the period 2016 to 2023.



Jamaica's Progress Towards Alcohol Policies and Legislation

WHO member states are expected to employ sustainable measures to reduce the harmful use of alcohol[1]. Jamaica has enacted the Spirits Control Act (1928) and the Spirit Licence (Amendment) Act, 2012 which manages the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol[2]. Jamaica's comprehensive legislation on alcohol use, the National Alcohol Policy is currently being considered.

[1] World Health Organisation. WHO Substance Abuse: Alcohol: Jamaica. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/country-profiles/substances-abuse/jam.pdf?sfvrsn=24a1363b_3
[2] Ministry of Justice, Jamaica. The Spirit Licence Act | Laws of Jamaica [Internet]. MOJ. moj.gov.jm. 2025. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04].Available from: https://laws.moj.gov.jm/library/statute/the-spirit-licence-act

Response

Jamaica's Progress Towards Alcohol Policies and Legislation

- ✅ Excise tax on beer
- ✅ Excise tax on wine
- ✅ Excise tax on spirits
- ✅ Restrictions on sales for particular hours
- ✅ Restrictions on sales to intoxicated persons
- ✅ Restrictions on sales for particular places
- ✅ National maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) when driving a vehicle (general / young / professional)% (0.08 BAC)
- ✅ Restrictions on sales for particular densities
- ✅ Legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising
- ✅ National government support for community action (any)
- ✅ National monitoring system(s) (any)
- ✅ National legal minimum age for sale off premises (all alcohol types) (≥18 years)
- ✅ National legal minimum age for sale on premises (all alcohol types) (≥18 years)

- ❌ Written National Policy/Action Plan
- ❌ Restrictions on sales for specific events
- ❌ Restrictions on sales on particular days
- ❌ Restrictions on sales at petrol stations
- ❌ Legally binding regulations on alcohol sales promotion
- ❌ Legally binding regulations on alcohol product placement (any)
- ❌ Legally binding regulations on alcohol sponsorship

KEY: ✅ Implemented ❌ Not Implemented

[1] World Health Organisation. WHO Substance Abuse: Alcohol: Jamaica. [Internet]. [Cited 2026 May 04]. Available from: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/country-profiles/substances-abuse/jam.pdf?sfvrsn=24a1363b_3

Glossary

Alcohol	Alcohol is a substance called ethanol that is produced by the yeast fermentation of sugars, grains or fruits[1,2].
Alcohol misuse	Alcohol misuse is the excess consumption of alcohol and includes heavy and binge drinking. It is a pattern of drinking that may lead to harm and increases the risk of harmful physical, social and mental problems. It can lead to alcohol use disorders (AUD)[3].
Alcohol use disorder (AUD)	Alcohol use disorder is a medical condition. It involves the inability to control the consumption of alcohol even when experiencing negative social, occupational and health consequences. AUD can be mild, moderate or severe and is sometimes referred to as alcoholism[3].
Beer	Beer is an alcoholic drink made from fermented grains like barley with 4-7% alcohol per volume[2,4].

Glossary

Best Buys and other recommended intereventions	Best buys are cost effective evidenced based interventions for combatting the four non-communicable diseases and key risk factors[5].
Binge drinker	Having four (4) or more drinks (females) or five or more drinks (males) at a time[6].
Current drinker	Person who drank alcohol within the last 30 days[6].
Harmful use of alcohol	Drinking that causes detrimental health and social consequences for the drinker (harmful drinking), the people around the drinker and society at large, as well as patterns of drinking that are associated with increased risk of adverse health outcomes[2,7].
Heavy episodic drinker (heavy drinker)	A person who consumed six or more standard drinks containing alcohol in one sitting within the last 30 days[2,8].

Glossary

Polysubstance use	Polysubstance use can be defined as the use of more than one drug either concurrently or consecutively to amplify or neutralize another drug's effect[2,9].
Risk factor	A risk factor is anything that increases the chances of developing a disease[10].
Rum	Rum is an alcoholic drink made from distilled alcohol from sugarcane and molasses with 40-50% alcohol per volume[2,4].
Vodka	Vodka is an alcoholic drink made from distilled alcohol from potatoes or grains with 40-50% alcohol per volume[2,4].
Wine	Wine is an alcoholic drink made from fermented grapes or other fruits with 12-15% alcohol per volume[2,4].

Glossary

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Notes

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