

CDC: Add \$2 per drink for US excessive drinking

October 17 2011, By MIKE STOBBE , AP Medical Writer

(AP) -- The toll of excessive drinking works out to about \$2 per drink, in terms of medical expenses and other costs to society, according to a new federal research.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study calculated societal costs from binge and heavy drinking beyond what consumers pay at the bar or liquor store. It's the first such federal estimate in more than a dozen years.

The study looked at costs that included - among other things - lost [work productivity](#), property damage from car crashes, expenditures for [liver cirrhosis](#) and other alcohol-associated medical problems, and money spent on incarceration of drunk drivers and criminals using alcohol.

The CDC estimated excessive drinking cost society nearly \$224 billion in 2006, the most recent year for which all necessary statistics were available. That worked out to about \$1.90 per drink, 80 cents of which was spent by federal, state or local governments, the researchers estimated. The rest came from drinkers, their families, private health insurers, employers, crime victims and others.

Most of that was related to binge drinking, in which four or five alcoholic beverages are consumed on one occasion.

"[Binge drinking](#) results in binge spending," said CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden.

[CDC officials](#) noted that while some health benefits have been associated with, say, a glass of wine each day, there are no health benefits linked to excessive drinking. They also said the new study likely represents an underestimate of the total cost.

Smoking has been estimated to cost society about \$193 billion annually. An older study estimated the cost of not exercising to be around \$150 billion.

The study was released Monday by the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#).

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