**Study Says Divorce Increases Risk for Alcohol Use Disorders**

For anyone who is thinking about [filing for divorce in Chicago](https://www.familylawadvocate.com/divorce/) or the Chicago metro area, it is important to learn more about how divorce ("dissolution of marriage") can affect the psychological and physical health of the parties. According to a recent study discussed in a *Forbes Magazine* [article](https://www.forbes.com/sites/zhanavrangalova/2017/10/16/divorce-increases-risk-for-alcohol-use-disorders-remarriage-lowers-it/#1d24b40315ca), divorce may increase the risk for alcohol use disorders while remarriage (after a divorce) may lower that risk. although the likelihood of engaging in abuse of alcohol *after* a divorce typically does not affect the outcome of a Chicago area divorce proceeding, it can impact the ways in which parenting responsibilities and parenting time are allocated.

**Divorce Can Be Linked to Alcohol Use and Abuse**

For quite some time, psychologists and other researchers have explored the link between alcohol abuse and divorce. As the article explains, “research consistently shows that, compared to married people, divorced people drink more and in more harmful ways (e.g., binge drinking), are more likely to have a lifetime or recent alcohol use disorder (AUD) diagnosis, engage in more alcohol-related risky behaviors, and have higher alcohol-related mortality.” What the recent study shows that is new is that “divorce increases the risk for subsequent alcohol abuse.” The results of the study were published in the peer-reviewed journal *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

In other words, the study suggests that people who get divorced may be more likely to develop alcohol use disorders or to engage in abusive alcohol use practices. The researchers looked at a population of about 950,000 people, including some who has an AUD diagnosis prior to divorce and some who were diagnosed after the dissolution of the marriage. What did the researchers conclude? In brief, “after divorce, the rates of first-time AUD increased sixfold in men and over sevenfold in women.” Even after taking into account other factors, divorce seemed to be a causal factor in the development and diagnosis of an alcohol use disorder.

**Alcohol Abuse Relapses After Divorce and the Potential Benefits of Remarriage**

In addition to the development of an alcohol use disorder during and after divorce, the study also showed that relapses were more likely. To be clear, the development and diagnosis of an alcohol use disorder is not tied to divorce as a single event, but rather to the process of divorce, including the months or years of problems in the marriage (prior to filing for divorce), the timetable for the divorce itself (from property distribution through the allocation of parental responsibilities), and in the years following divorce. In most cases, “the risk for AUD increased substantially in the year of the divorce and remained elevated for many years in those who did not remarry.”

The age of the individual did not appear to be a major contributing factor. While female study participants did show higher rates of AUD, sex was also not a major contributing factor given that both men and women showed higher risk of alcohol abuse problems due to divorce. And it is not only divorce—the ending of a marriage in general has been linked to AUD. For instance, the death of a spouse has also been tied to alcohol abuse and other related disorders.

Notably, the risk for AUD decreased in those individuals who remarried, suggesting that marriage—whether it is a first, second, or subsequent marriage—can have physical and psychological benefits.

**Seek Advice from a Chicago Divorce Lawyer**

If you have questions about filing for divorce in the Chicago area, a dedicated Chicago divorce attorney can answer your questions today. [Contact M. Scott Gordon & Associates](https://www.familylawadvocate.com/contact-us/) to learn more about how we can assist you.

