

# The State of Dry January: *From Movement to Mainstream*

A report from Oar Health





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## **Dry January is mainstream with almost half of monthly drinkers having attempted the challenge.**

47% of people who drink alcohol at least once per month have attempted Dry January according to a 2025 survey of 1,008 nationally representative American adults conducted by Oar Health.

But participation varies by age, income and region:

- Millennials (ages 29 to 44) are most likely to have attempted Dry January at 51% with Boomers (61 to 79) least likely at 30%
- High earners are more likely to participate. 55% of people with household incomes over \$250,000 have participated vs. 44% of those earning under \$50,000
- Southerners are most likely to have taken on the challenge with 51% reporting a past attempt vs. 43% of Northeasterners

Better health (35%), reduced alcohol use (21%), weight loss (12%) and resetting after the holidays (11%) are the goals reported most often by participants.





# 73%

**of people who have attempted Dry  
January have completed the challenge  
successfully**



**“It is common, not exceptional, for people to change their relationships with alcohol, sometimes for a month, sometimes for life. We must tell these underreported but incredibly hopeful stories.”**

**— Jonathan Hunt-Glassman  
CEO, Oar Health**



## **Cravings and peer pressure are common challenges.**

60% of people who have attempted Dry January experienced cravings for alcohol.

People who experienced cravings were four times as likely not to complete Dry January. 39% of participants with cravings did not complete the challenge vs. 9% without cravings.

41% of participants felt pressure to drink.

Friends (for 77% of those who felt pressure), social events (52%), family (24%) and colleagues (18%) were the most common sources of peer pressure.

People who felt pressure were twice as likely not to complete Dry January successfully. 41% of those who felt pressure fell short vs. 17% of those who weren't pressured.

## **The hardest days and events are predictable.**

Fridays are the most common day for Dry January attempts to come to an end.

49% of people who did not complete the challenge had their first drink on a Friday followed by 25% on a Saturday and 11% on a Thursday.

37% of those who did not complete Dry January cited a celebratory event as the main cause.

People who did not complete the challenge remained dry for 15 days at the median.

Oar Health predicts that the toughest day to stick with Dry January goals in 2026 will be Friday, January 16, the start of a long weekend in the United States.



**“Giving up alcohol, even for a short period of time, is not simple. Physiological symptoms such as cravings and social influences like peer pressure at a party can both stand in the way of change, even when motivation is high.”**

**— Dr. Joseph Volpicelli, MD, PhD  
Oar Health Senior Adviser**

## Support helps. And comes in many forms.

Most Dry January participants go it alone. Only 19% of Dry January participants used support from one of six common tools: an online community, a mutual peer support group, drink tracking apps, alcohol-free drinks, therapy, or medication.

But people who did use at least one form of support were 7% more likely to complete Dry January successfully with a 77% success rate vs. 73% among those who did not use support.

Online communities were by far the most popular support option with 42% of attempters participating in one vs. 12% incorporating zero proof drinks, 7% participating in mutual peer support, 4% using a smartphone app, 4% getting therapy, and 3% taking medication.



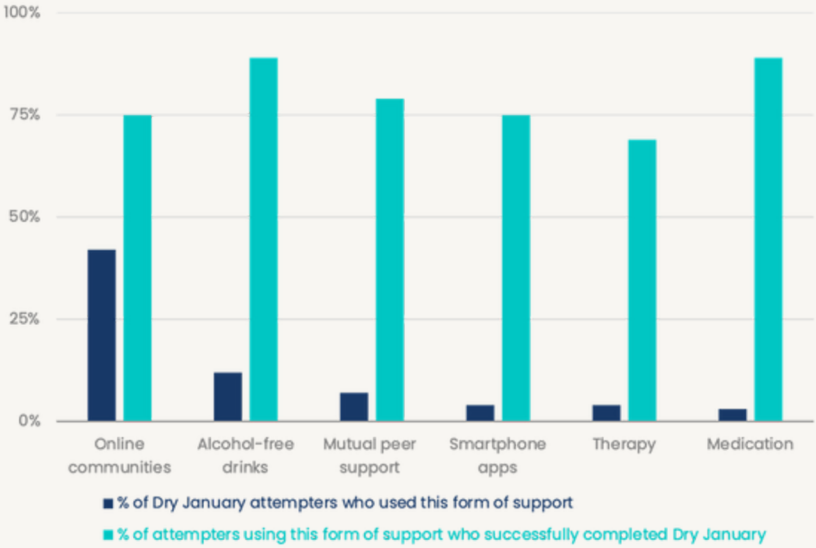


**“Some people can change their relationship with alcohol through willpower alone. But it’s easier with evidence-based help. Treatment works.”**

**— Joshua D Lee, MD  
Chief Clinical Adviser, Oar Health**

# People who incorporated zero proof drinks or took medication were most likely to succeed.

Although participating in an online community was the most popular option for support during Dry January, 89% of people who incorporated zero proof drinks or took medication to help them reach their goals were successful.



**“Toolkits for change are not one-size-fits-all. Tools that don’t fall under the umbrella of ‘treatment’ like zero proof beverages and tools that do like FDA-approved medications can both support meaningful change.”**

**— Jonathan Hunt-Glassman  
CEO, Oar Health**

## **Staying dry is not the only measure of success. January is not the only time to change one's relationship with alcohol.**

31 days of abstinence is not the only way to define success in Dry January.

“Dry-ish” January offers a way to reevaluate and reset drinking habits that may appeal to people whose long-term goal is moderation, not sobriety.

Our past research indicates that about 70% of people who want to change their relationship with alcohol have the goal of moderation rather than lifelong sobriety. Meaningful reductions in alcohol use are likely to yield significant improvements in health and wellbeing.

It can be tempting to view falling short of Dry (or dry-ish) January goals as a failure. But we prefer to view slips and lapses as learning opportunities. Even people who end up drinking more than intended in January can gain valuable clarity on their goals, motivations, the challenges and triggers to navigate, and the sources of support that fit them best.

Finally, while the new year is a natural occasion to pursue healthier habits, it is not the only opportunity. Sober October, for example, provides a chance to reset that coincides with the seasonal change from summer to fall and the return to school.

The truth is that there is no bad time to drink less or quit.

**“Dry January is not a morality test. It’s a 31 day experiment: take alcohol out and notice what changes — in your sleep, mood, energy and cravings. Even if you slip, you still learn. The goal is not perfection; it’s information.”**

**— Dr. Joseph Volpicelli, MD, PhD  
Oar Health Senior Adviser**



# About this report

Between December 8 and December 12, 2025, Oar Health surveyed 1,008 people over the age of 21 who drink alcohol at least monthly.

Respondents are nationally representative based on age, sex, household income, and region.

Oar Health is a virtual care platform that helps people drink less or quit. Built by a former patient and backed by pioneers in addiction medicine, Oar delivers a daily pill to drink less plus expert guidance. No judgment, just help.

Learn more at [www.oarhealth.com](http://www.oarhealth.com)

