

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ALCOHOL

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Drinking more than the following amounts of alcohol puts a person at risk for health and social problems:

- 1 drink a day for women or anyone older than 65 years
- 2 drinks a day for men younger than 65 years
- 5 or more drinks per occasion for men and 4 or more drinks per occasion for women.

A standard drink is 12 oz. of beer or a wine cooler, 5 oz. of wine, 3 to 4 oz. of sherry or port, 2 to 3 oz. of cordial/liqueur/aperitif, 1.5 oz. of spirits (e.g., a single shot glass of 80-proof gin, vodka, whiskey), or 8 to 9 oz. of malt liquor.

Over time, drinking more than moderate amounts of alcohol can result in:

- Liver disease
- Heart disease and high blood pressure
- Pancreatic disease
- Accidents and injuries
- Problems at home, at work, and with relationships

Some people with certain health conditions should not drink alcohol at all:

- Pregnant women
- History of liver or pancreatic disease or bleeding in the brain
- Cancer or precancerous changes in the esophagus, throat, or mouth

People with a family history of alcoholism are at higher risk for alcoholism and should be particularly cautious about drinking.

Alcohol interacts with many common medications. Ask your doctor about drinking alcohol if you take medications.



Short self-test: Are you drinking too much?

1. Have you ever felt you should *cut* down on your drinking?
2. Have people *annoyed* you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or *guilty* about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover (*eye-opener*)?

Two "yes" answers to the above questions indicates a possible alcohol problem that you should discuss with your doctor.

For More Information

www.niaaa.nih.gov

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (Including pamphlets on Aging and Alcohol Abuse, Drinking and Your Pregnancy, A Family History of Alcoholism: Are You at Risk?, Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines, How to Cut Down on Your Drinking)

www.aa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous. Information on treatment of alcohol problems available in English, Spanish, and French.

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator.

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