

Drinking Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is very common in our society, but drinking alcohol can be harmful. In the U.S. more than 17 million people are alcoholics or have alcohol problems. Every year Americans die as a result of drinking. About 75,000 people die from "excessive" alcohol use. This is the 3rd leading lifestyle-related cause of death. Each year, there are more than 100,000 deaths from problems related to drinking. Alcohol plays a role in nearly half of all traffic deaths.



How much is too much?

Moderate alcohol use is no more than 1 drink a day for adult women and men over the age of 65. For adult men younger than 65, it is no more than 2 drinks per day.

Heavy drinking is an average of 2 drinks a day for men younger than 65. For women and men over the age of 65 it is an average of more than of 1 drink a day.

Do you have an alcohol problem?

Do these actions and questions describe you? If yes, talk with your health care team about getting help.

- Drinking alone or in secret.
- Not remembering conversations or commitments. This is referred to as "blacking out".
- A habit of having drinks before, with or after dinner. Do you become annoyed when this is changed or questioned?

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- Loss of interest in activities and hobbies that used to bring you pleasure.
- Feeling a need to drink.
- Becoming irritable around the time you usually drink. Does it happen especially if there is no alcohol available?
- Keeping alcohol in unusual places at home, at work, or in the car.
- Gulping drinks or ordering doubles. Do you become drunk intentionally to feel good or do you drink to feel “normal”.
- Having social problems. These include problems with relationships and legal, financial and employment problems?
- Developing a tolerance to alcohol. Do you need an increasing number of drinks to feel alcohol’s effects?
- Experiencing physical withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating and shaking, if you do not drink.

If you are having a problem with alcohol, talk with your healthcare team about getting help.

