Drinking alcohol can have benefits (relaxation, social interactions, taste) as well as a variety of problems such as:

- Reduced inhibitions (doing and saying things you wouldn’t do or say sober)
- Motor impairment, car crashes, and other accidents
- Memory/concentration problems
- Negative interactions with prescribed medications

If you do choose to drink alcohol, drinking moderately reduces your risk for alcohol-related problems. Here are some recommended limits:

- Women: 1 drink a day and no more than 7 drinks per week
- Men: 2 drinks a day and no more than 14 drinks per week
- Over 64 years of age: 1 drink a day and no more than 7 drinks per week
- Avoid heavy drinking, defined as 5 or more drinks in 2 hours (men), 4 or more drinks in 2 hours (women)
- These guidelines refer to a drink equal to a 12 oz. beer (5%), a 5 oz. glass of wine (12%) or 1 ½ oz. spirits (80 proof)

Are you wondering or concerned about how much or how often you drink?

Talk to any member of your VA healthcare team.

Your VA Healthcare team is not there to label or judge you. Instead, they will listen to your concerns and discuss a variety of different options available to help you reduce or stop your alcohol use and live a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle.

Consult the Veterans Health Library:
http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/

The Veterans Health Library (VHL) offers Veterans, their families and caregivers 24/7 Internet access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information that’s consistent with VA clinical practice. Its information, resources, and tools are engaging, “Veteran-friendly” and written in plain language VHL helps Veterans understand and manage health problems, make informed health decisions, and actively partner with their health care teams. Check out the VHL for more information on Limit Alcohol:

- Things to Know About Alcohol
  http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/Search/142,UG4974_VA
- Alcohol Use Disorders
  http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/Search/SearchResults.pg?SearchPhrase=%20alcohol%20&SearchType=text&SearchOperator=And
Take a private and anonymous screening:
The AUDIT C is available for your personal use on My HealtheVet:
https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=mentalHealth&contentPage=mh_screening_tools/ALCOHOL_SCREENING.HTML

Explore these additional Department of Veterans Affairs Resources:

- Limit Alcohol: A Healthy Living Message
  http://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Limit_Alcohol.asp
- Limit Alcohol Whiteboard Video
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-k7Zq29QFU
- PTSD and Problems with Alcohol Use – This site gives information on how PTSD and alcohol affect each other and where to get help.
- Alcohol and Hepatitis C – Use this interactive guide to learn what you need to know about hepatitis C and alcohol use, including alcohol’s effect on liver scarring, viral load, and response to treatment.
  http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/daily/alcohol/resources.asp
- Living with HIV/AIDS – Drugs and Alcohol - Use this interactive guide if you are HIV positive to learn what alcohol and other “recreational” drugs will do to your body.

Other Federal Government Resources
(you are leaving the Department of Veterans Affairs web site.)

National Institute on Aging
- Alcohol Use in Older People – This short brochure discusses alcohol use in older adults.
  http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/alcohol.htm

Additional resources and web-based tools

- Moderate. If you’ve decided you need to cut back on your drinking, consider the Moderate Drinking online app (www.moderatedrinking.com). Also consider the mutual help group, Moderation Management (www.moderation.org). It is the only mutual help group that is supportive of people cutting back on their drinking.
- Stop. If you want to stop drinking or using drugs, consider the Overcoming Addictions online app (www.overcomingaddictions.net). It is an abstinence focused, cognitive-behavioral program based on SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org). SMART Recovery is an alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org).