

Alcohol Consumption



If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

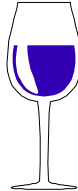
What Is Moderation?

Women	Men
No more than one drink per day	No more than two drinks per day

One drink is equivalent to:



12 ounces of beer



5 ounces of wine



1 ½ ounces of distilled spirits

Alcoholic beverages supply calories but few nutrients, and are harmful when consumed in excess. Some people should not drink at all. Excess alcohol alters judgment and can lead to dependency and a great many other serious health problems.

Taking more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men can raise the risk for motor vehicle crashes, other injuries, high blood pressure, stroke, violence, suicide and certain types of cancer. Even one drink per day can slightly raise the risk of breast cancer.

Too much alcohol may cause social and psychological problems, cirrhosis of the liver, inflammation of the pancreas, and damage to the brain and heart. Heavy drinkers also are at risk of malnutrition because alcohol contains calories that may substitute for those in nutritious foods. Alcoholic beverages should be consumed in moderation and with meals to slow alcohol absorption.

Drinking in moderation may lower risk for coronary heart disease, mainly among men over age 45 and women over age 55. However, there are other factors that reduce the risk of heart disease, including a healthy diet, physical activity, avoidance of smoking, and maintenance of a healthy weight.

Some studies suggest that older people may become more sensitive to the effects of alcohol as they age.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

Drink Sensibly

Excessive alcohol consumption is an important factor in more than 100,000 deaths in the United States each year. Between 20% and 30% of the patients seen in U.S. hospital emergency departments (ED) have alcohol problems. Nearly half of alcohol-related deaths are the result of injuries from motor-vehicle crashes, falls, fires, drowning, homicides, and suicides.

Do not drink alcohol before or while driving a motor vehicle or operating heavy machinery. If you have concerns about your alcohol or drug use, talk to your doctor. If you ever are required to take medication, check to see if you can drink alcohol while taking your medication.

Some people should not drink alcoholic beverages at all.

These include:

- ✓ Individuals of any age who cannot restrict their drinking to moderate levels. This is a special concern for recovering alcoholics, problem drinkers, and people whose family members have alcohol problems.
- ✓ Individuals who plan to drive, operate machinery, or take part in other activities that require attention, skill or coordination. Most people retain some alcohol in the blood up to 2 to 3 hours after a single drink.
- ✓ Individuals taking prescription or over-the counter medications that can interact with alcohol. Alcohol alters the effectiveness or toxicity of many medications, and some medications may increase blood alcohol levels. If you take medications, ask your health care provider for advice about alcohol intake.
- ✓ Others depending on many factors.

