

LEARN ABOUT

ALCOHOL USE AND YOUR HEALTH



This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

Why Alcohol Can Be Harmful

Your liver processes alcohol but can handle only a limited amount at a time. Drinking too much can damage your liver and other organs. Even occasional heavy drinking can lead to serious health problems.

What is Too Much

Binge Drinking:

- 4 or more drinks at once for women
- 5 or more drinks at once for men

Heavy Drinking:

- 8 or more drinks per week for women
- 15 or more drinks per week for men

Drinking While Pregnant:

- No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy

Safe Amounts (Moderate Drinking)

- Men: Up to 2 drinks a day.
- Women: Up to 1 drink a day

Note: Some beverages contain more than one standard serving of alcohol, which is about 14 grams (0.6 ounces) of pure alcohol

Short-Term Dangers of Drinking Too Much

- Accidents: Car crashes, falls, burns, or drowning
- Violence: Fights, harming others, or being harmed
- Alcohol Poisoning: Excessive alcohol can stop breathing or heartbeat
- Overdose: Risk increases when alcohol is combined with drugs like opioids
- Unsafe Sex: Can lead to sexually transmitted infections or unintended pregnancy
- Harm to Babies: Drinking during pregnancy can cause miscarriage or conditions such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)

Long-Term Dangers of Drinking Too Much

- Cancer
- Heart disease and high blood pressure
- Liver damage
- Stroke
- Weakened immune system
- Mental health issues including depression
- Memory and learning difficulties