Guide to Low-Risk Drinking

Modified by Dr. Stephen Maisto and Dr. Jennifer Funderburk from the World Health Organization Brief Alcohol Intervention Guide (http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/)
The Drinkers’ Pyramid

**AUDIT Scores**

- 0
- 1 – 7: 35%
- 8 – 19: 20%
- 20+: 5%

**Types of Drinkers**

- Abstainers: 40%
- Low-Risk Drinkers
- High-Risk Drinkers
- Probable Alcohol Dependence
Effects of High-Risk Drinking

- Premature aging, Drinker’s nose.
- Cancer of throat and mouth.
- Frequent colds, Reduced resistance to infection. Increased risk of pneumonia.
- Liver damage.
- Trembling hands, Tingling fingers, Numbness, Painful nerves.
- Ulcer.
- Impaired sensation leading to falls.
- Numb, tingling toes, Painful nerves.
- Alcohol dependence. Memory loss.
- Weakness of heart muscle, Heart failure, Anemia. Impaired blood clotting, Breast cancer.
- Vitamin deficiency, Bleeding, Severe inflammation of the stomach, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Malnutrition.
- Inflammation of the pancreas.
- In men: Impaired sexual performance. In women: Risk of giving birth to deformed, retarded babies or low birth weight babies.

High-risk drinking may lead to social, legal, medical, domestic, job and financial problems. It may also cut your lifespan and lead to accidents and death from drunken driving.
WHAT IS LOW-RISK DRINKING?

- On any DAY—Never drink more than 4 drinks (men) or 3 drinks (women)
- In a typical WEEK—No more than 14 drinks (men) or 7 drinks (women)

But remember: there are times when even one or two drinks can be too much — for example:

- When driving or operating machinery
- When pregnant or breast feeding
- When taking certain medications
- If you cannot control your drinking

Ask your health care worker for more information.
1 standard drink =

5 oz. wine

12 oz. beer

1.5 oz. shot of spirits
Should I Stop Drinking or Just Cut Down?

You should stop drinking if:

- You have tried to cut down before but have not been successful
- You suffer from morning shakes during a heavy drinking period
- You have high blood pressure, you are pregnant, you have liver disease
- You are taking medicine that reacts with alcohol

You can try to drink at low-risk levels if:

- During the last year you have been drinking at low-risk levels most of the time
- You would like to drink at low-risk levels

YOUR DRINKING GOAL:
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