

Treatment Options

- ★ The first step is to talk with your primary doctor. Ask for more information about treatment for substance or alcohol problems.
- ★ There are many levels of treatment possible. They range from a one time meeting, to weekly meetings on an outpatient basis, to a 28-35 day stay in a residential treatment program.
- ★ Your doctor and/or health care team will work with you to find the best program for you.
- ★ There are a wide variety of programs both within and outside the VA that may help. These include meetings sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous (<http://www.aa.org/>) and Narcotics Anonymous (<http://www.na-recovery.org/>).

Sources for more information:

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse
<http://www.nida.nih.gov/>

National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information
<http://www.health.gov/>

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Recommended Guidelines for Alcohol Use

For **men** - no more than 14 drinks per week and no more than 4 drinks per occasion

For **women** - no more than 7 drinks per week and no more than 3 drinks per occasion

1 Drink = 1 Beer



= 5 oz. Wine



= 1.5 oz Liquor



If you answer **“yes”** to any of these questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- ★ Have you ever felt you should **cut down** on your drinking or drug use?
- ★ Do you **get annoyed** at criticism about your drinking or drug use?
- ★ Do you ever **feel guilty** about your drinking or drug use?
- ★ Do you ever take an **early-morning drink** or use drugs first thing in the morning to get the day started or to stop the “shakes”?



Quick Guide - Patient/Family Readjustment

Military personnel are deeply affected by their war experiences. Adjustment difficulties are common. These are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. This series of brochures deal with issues that are common following deployment. Remember - identifying your problem areas and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It means you are actively coping with your challenges.

Substance Use & Abuse

- ★ About one in ten soldiers returning from deployment will have a problem with alcohol or other substances
- ★ Understanding what makes alcohol or substance use a “problem” is important
- ★ There are resources for treatment at every VA medical center



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If you think you have a problem with alcohol or drugs

The following suggestions from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism may help as you work with your health care team to find the best treatment for you.

★ Write your reasons for cutting down or stopping -

You may want to improve your health, sleep better, or get along better with your family or friends. Make a list of the reasons you want to drink less.

★ Set a drinking goal -

Choose a limit for how much you will drink. You may choose to cut down or not to drink at all.

★ Watch it at home -

Keep a small amount or no alcohol at home. Don't keep temptation around.

★ Drink slowly -

When you drink, sip your drink slowly. Take a break of 1 hour between drinks. Drink soda, water, or juice after a drink with alcohol. Do not drink on an empty stomach! Eat food when you are drinking.

★ Take a break from alcohol -

Pick a day or two each week when you will not drink at all. Then, try to stop drinking for 1 week. Think about how you feel physically and emotionally on these days. When you succeed and feel better, you may find it easier to cut down for good.

★ Learn how to say NO -

You do not have to drink when other people drink. You do not have to take a drink that is given to you. Practice ways to say no politely. Stay away from people who give you a hard time about not drinking.

DO NOT GIVE UP!

Most people do not cut down or give up drinking all at once. Just like a diet, it is not easy to change. That is okay. If you do not reach your goal the first time, try again. Remember, get support from people who care about you and want to help. Do not give up!