

You may have heard that alcohol is good for your heart. What you may not have heard is that:

- The health benefits of alcohol apply mainly to people over the age of 45. A little goes a long way. In most cases, one drink of beer, wine or liquor every other day is enough.
- For most people, more than two drinks a day does more harm than good.
- Women who have more than nine drinks a week have higher rates of cancer and other problems than women who drink less.
- Men who have more than fourteen drinks a week also have higher rates of alcohol-related problems.
- Young people have very low rates of heart disease but very high rates of alcohol-related injuries and death.
- If you want to improve your health, you're better off eating a healthier diet, getting more exercise, and giving up smoking, rather than drinking more or starting to drink.



So bring a little balance into your life.

For advice on alcohol and health talk to your doctor or other health professional, or call 1-800-463-6273 (416-595-6111 in Toronto).

The Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines were developed by a team of medical and social researchers from the University of Toronto and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. They have been endorsed by the following organizations:

- Addictions Foundation of Manitoba
- Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
- Alcohol Policy Network
- Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Ontario Public Health Association

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Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

maximize life, minimize risk






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Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

0	Zero drinks = lowest risk of an alcohol-related problem
2	No more than 2 standard drinks on any one day
9	Women: up to 9 standard drinks a week
14	Men: up to 14 standard drinks a week

1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol =

wine	spirits	beer
	or 	or 
5 oz/142 mL of wine (12% alcohol)	1.5 oz/43 mL of spirits (40% alcohol)	12 oz/341 mL of regular strength beer (5% alcohol)

Higher alcohol beers and coolers have more alcohol than one standard drink.

- If you don't already drink, don't start for health reasons.
- If you do drink, avoid getting intoxicated or drunk.
- Wait at least one hour between drinks.
- Have something to eat. Drink non-alcoholic beverages, such as water, soft drinks or fruit juice.

The Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines are for people of legal drinking age.

Drink less or not at all if you:

- have health problems such as liver disease or mental illness
- are taking medications such as sedatives, painkillers or sleeping pills
- have a personal or family history of drinking problems
- are pregnant, trying to get pregnant or breastfeeding
- will be operating vehicles such as cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles or bicycles
- need to be alert; for example, if you will be operating machinery or working with farm implements or dangerous equipment
- will be doing sports or other physical activities where you need to be in control
- are responsible for the safety of others at work or at home
- are told not to drink for legal, medical or other reasons

If you belong to any of these groups, check with your doctor.

Tips for following these Guidelines:

- Know what a standard drink is.
- Keep track of how much you drink – daily and weekly.
- Never drink and drive.
- Don't start drinking for health reasons. To keep your heart healthy, eat better, exercise more and don't smoke.
- Be a responsible host – encourage your guests to follow these guidelines.
- Talk to your kids about alcohol.
- Find out about programs and policies that support low-risk drinking.
- Develop an alcohol policy for your home, workplace, school or community organization.

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