DO YOU HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM?*

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Total Score

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

Your drinking could be harmful if your total score is:
• 3 or higher for women and people 65 or older
• 4 or higher for men

Talk to your doctor, or see More Information and Help.


EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS DANGEROUS.
Stop drinking while you’re still thinking.
How Much Is Too Much?

For men:
• Excessive drinking is defined as 5 or more drinks in a short period of time, such as a 2-hour period, or
• More than 14 drinks in a week.

For women and people 65 and older:
• Excessive drinking is defined as 4 or more drinks in a short period of time, such as a 2-hour period, or
• More than 7 drinks in a week.

Excessive Drinking Is Dangerous
It increases the risk of many problems.
• Cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver
• Hepatitis
• Osteoporosis
• Hypertension
• Enlarged heart or weakening of the heart muscle
• Cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, breast, and colon
• Weakened immune system.
• Pneumonia and other infections
• Accidents and injuries
• Committing or being the victim of acts of violence
• Depression, dementia, and other mental disorders
• Suicide

Sometimes Any Drinking Can Be Harmful
It is safest to avoid alcohol altogether if you:
• Will be driving or operating machinery
• Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
• Are caring for children or others
• Have a personal history of alcohol or drug dependence
• Are taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that interact with alcohol
• Are under legal drinking age (21)
  • Children and adolescents who drink are at much higher risk for motor-vehicle crashes and alcohol-related brain damage.
  • The younger people are when they start drinking, the more likely they are to have problems with alcohol use as adults.

Be extra cautious about drinking if you have:
• A family history of alcohol or drug dependence
• Certain illnesses, such as diabetes, congestive heart failure, or long-term stomach, pancreas, or liver problems – even one drink a day can accelerate liver damage in people with hepatitis
• A history of depression
• A psychiatric illness

What Is Alcohol Dependence?
It is a health condition that often gets worse unless it is addressed.

Symptoms include:
• Craving – a strong urge to drink
• Loss of control – being unable to stop drinking
• Physical dependence – withdrawal symptoms (nausea, sweating, shakiness, anxiety)
• Increased tolerance – the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to feel its effects
• Blackouts – forgetting what happens when drinking

What counts as 1 drink?
A 12-oz. glass, bottle, or can of beer or ale
A 5-oz. glass of wine, or a 3.5-oz. glass of fortified wine
A 1.5-oz. “shot” of distilled liquor or brandy (straight or in a mixed drink)

Problem Drinking Is Treatable
Many treatment options are available, including medications.
• Looking honestly at your own drinking and its effects on you and others can be difficult. But honesty is usually the first and most important step in getting help.
• For help and information, talk to your doctor or call LifeNet (see More Information).

Don’t give up!
People can and do get better, every day. Recovery is possible.

More Information and Help
• For help with alcohol or drug use problems: call 311 or LifeNet (800-543-3638)
• Spanish LifeNet: 877-AYUDESE (877-298-3373)
• Asian LifeNet (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): 877-990-8585
• Alcoholics Anonymous: www.nyintergroup.org or 212-647-1680
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