Alcohol Use and Your Health

Drinking too much can harm your health. Excessive alcohol use leads to more than 95,000 deaths in the United States each year, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 29 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 were estimated at $249 billion, or $2.05 a drink.

What is considered a “drink”? [12 ounces 5% ABV beer, 8 ounces 7% ABV malt liquor, 5 ounces 12% ABV wine, 1.5 ounces 40% (80 proof) ABV distilled spirits (examples: gin, rum, vodka, whiskey)]

US Standard Drink Sizes

Excessive alcohol use includes:

Binge Drinking
For women, 4 or more drinks consumed on an occasion
For men, 5 or more drinks consumed on an occasion

Heavy Drinking
For women, 8 or more drinks per week
For men, 15 or more drinks per week

Any alcohol use by pregnant women

Any alcohol use by people younger than 21

If you choose to drink, do so in moderation.

DON’T DRINK AT ALL if you are younger than 21, or if you are or may be pregnant, or if you have health problems that could be made worse by drinking.

FOR WOMEN, 1 drink or less in a day
FOR MEN, 2 drinks or less in a day
Or nondrinking

People who don’t drink alcohol SHOULD NOT START for any reason. DRINKING LESS is better for health than drinking more.
Excessive alcohol use has immediate effects that increase the risk of many harmful health conditions. These are most often the result of binge drinking. Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems.

**Short-term health risks**

**Injuries**
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Falls
- Drownings
- Burns

**Violence**
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Sexual assault
- Intimate partner violence

**Alcohol poisoning**

**Reproductive health**
- Risky sexual behaviors
- Unintended pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders

**Long-term health risks**

**Chronic diseases**
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Liver disease
- Digestive problems

**Cancers**
- Breast
- Mouth and throat
- Liver
- Colon and rectum
- Esophagus
- Voice box

**Learning and memory problems**
- Dementia
- Poor school performance

**Mental health**
- Depression
- Anxiety

**Social problems**
- Family problems
- Job-related problems
- Unemployment

**Alcohol use disorders**