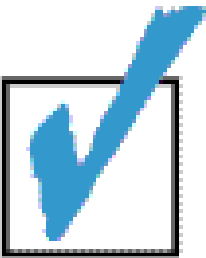


# Alcohol Use-Good or Bad for You?

*Going for the 3 Increases: Increase in Health, Increase in Happiness  
& Increase in Energy*

Strategies for  
Success in Health  
Management

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# How Big a Problem is Alcohol Use Disorder?

- Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in the USA
- In 2012, 17.7 million Americans (6.8 percent of the population) were dependent on alcohol or had problems related to their use of alcohol (abuse)
- Alcohol Use Disorder (Alcoholism) is a long-term (chronic) disease
- It's not a weakness or a lack of willpower. Like many other diseases, it has a course that can be predicted, has known symptoms & is influenced by your genes & life situation



# Alcohol Facts to Consider

- Consumed in moderate amounts, alcoholic beverages are relaxing & in some cases may even have beneficial effects on heart health
- Consumed in excess, alcohol is poisonous & is considered a drug
- It is estimated that close to 18 million or one in 12 adults in the U.S. abuse alcohol or are chronic alcoholics
- Nearly 100,000 Americans die each year as a result of alcohol abuse
- Alcohol is a factor in more than half of the country's homicides, suicides & traffic accidents
- Alcohol abuse also plays a role in many social & domestic problems, from job absenteeism & crimes against property to spousal & child abuse



# What are Immediate Physical Effects of Drinking Alcohol

- Effects range from mild mood changes to complete loss of coordination, vision, balance, and speech which can be signals of acute alcohol intoxication or drunkenness
- These effects usually wear off in a matter of hours after a person stops drinking
- Many law-enforcement agencies regard a .08 percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream as evidence of intoxication
- Larger amounts of blood alcohol can impair brain function & eventually cause unconsciousness
- An extreme overdose, alcohol poisoning, can be fatal



# How do you know if you have a problem with Alcohol Use Disorder?

You might be dependent on alcohol if you have three or more of the following problems in a year:

- You cannot quit drinking or control how much you drink
- You need to drink more to get the same effect
- You have withdrawal symptoms when you stop drinking including feeling sick to your stomach, sweating, shakiness & anxiety
- You spend a lot of time drinking & recovering from drinking, or you have given up other activities so you can drink
- You have tried to quit drinking or to cut back on the amount you drink but haven't been able to
- You continue to drink even though it harms your relationships & causes physical problems.



# How much drinking is too much?

Alcohol is part of many people's lives & may have a place in cultural & family traditions

It can sometimes be hard to know when you begin to drink too much

You are at risk of drinking too much & should talk to your medical team if you are a:

- Woman who has more than 3 drinks at one time or more than 7 drinks a week (A standard drink is 1 can of beer, 1 glass of wine, or 1 mixed drink) **OR**
- Man who has more than 4 drinks at one time or more than 14 drinks a week



## What's Drinking in Moderation

- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), people who drink in moderation are less likely to develop alcohol dependence
- NIAAA defines "moderate" as no more than 4 drinks in a day & 14 drinks per week for men & no more than 3 drinks per day & 7 drinks per week for women
- **A Drink** is defined as: 12 ounces of beer or a 5 ounce glass of wine or a 1.5 ounce glass of distilled spirits



# What are Some Signs of Alcohol Abuse or Dependence?

Certain behaviors may mean that you're having trouble with alcohol  
These include:

- Drinking in the morning, often being drunk for long periods of time, or drinking alone
- Changing what you drink, such as switching from beer to wine because you think it will help you drink less or keep you from getting drunk
- Feeling guilty after drinking
- Making excuses for your drinking or doing things to hide your drinking, such as buying alcohol at different stores
- Not remembering what you did while you were drinking (blackouts)
- Worrying that you won't get enough alcohol for an evening or weekend





# What are the Causes of Alcoholism?

The cause of alcoholism seems to be a blend of factors that vary among individuals

- Genetics
- Physical
- Psychological
- Environmental
- Social

**Genetic factors are considered crucial:** A person's risk of becoming an alcoholic is 3 to 4 times greater if a parent is alcoholic. Some children of alcohol abusers, however, overcome the hereditary pattern by not drinking any alcohol at all



# Facts about Chronic Alcoholism

Chronic alcoholism is:

- Progressive & potentially fatal disease
- Characterized by an incessant craving for, increased tolerance of, physical dependence upon & loss of control over drinking alcohol
- Physical dependence on alcohol may or may not be obvious to other people
- While some chronic alcoholics get very drunk, others exercise enough control to give the appearance of coping with everyday affairs in a near-normal way
- However, alcoholism can lead to a number of physical ailments, including hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, brain & heart damage, end-stage liver damage, enlarged blood vessels in the skin, pneumonia, tuberculosis, chronic gastritis & recurrent pancreatitis.



## Additional Facts About Alcoholism

Alcoholism can lead to:

- Impotence in men
- Damage to the fetus in pregnant women
- An elevated risk of cancer of the larynx, esophagus, liver, breast, stomach, pancreas & upper gastrointestinal tract.

Because alcoholics seldom have adequate diets, they are likely to have nutritional deficiencies

Heavy drinkers typically have impaired liver function & at least one in five develops cirrhosis



# Myth about Alcohol: Hangovers Are No Big Deal

**FACT:** Heavy drinking:

- Rocks the central nervous system
- Tinkers with brain chemicals leading to headache, dizziness & nausea
- Sends you running to the bathroom so often you become dehydrated
- The morning-after price can include a pounding headache, fatigue, cotton mouth, queasy stomach & a weakened immune system



## Myth about Alcohol: Hangovers Are Gender-Blind

**FACT:** Listen women don't go crazy with free drinks on Ladies' Night:

- If a man & woman drink the same amount, the woman is more likely to feel the effects
- Because men have a higher percentage of water in their bodies, which helps dilute the alcohol they drink
- When women drink the same amount, more alcohol builds up in the bloodstream.



# Myth about Alcohol: Only Bingers Get Hangovers

**FACT:** You don't have to get wasted to pay a price the next morning:

- Just a couple of drinks can trigger a headache & other hangover symptoms for some people
- Having water or a nonalcoholic drink between each beer or hard drink can help keep you hydrated & cut down on the overall amount of alcohol you drink



# Myth about Alcohol: Alcohol Helps You Sleep Well

**FACT:** Just the opposite:

- While a nightcap may help you doze off more quickly, too much undermines the quality of your sleep
- You don't spend as much time in all-important REM cycles & you tend to wake up too soon
- If you've been drinking heavily, a hangover might strike in the last part of the night, leaving you too uncomfortable to get back to sleep



## Myth about Alcohol: After Heavy Drinking take Pain Relievers Before Bed

### FACT:

- Over-the-counter painkillers peak in about four hours, so a bedtime dose won't help by the time you wake up
- A better plan is not to drink so heavily so that you can get a good night's sleep
- Warning: Don't take acetaminophen (Tylenol) after a night of drinking. The combination could hurt your liver





# NO MYTH: Alcohol Poisoning

**FACT:** Alcohol poisoning is a life-threatening emergency.

**Symptoms include:**

- Confusion, stupor
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow, irregular breathing
- Low body temperature, bluish skin

It's easy to blow off these symptoms as the price of partying hard, but if you see someone vomit multiple times or pass out after drinking heavily, there's a risk of severe dehydration or brain damage. Call 911.



# How Healthy are Alcohol Beverages? (1)

- For years now we've been hearing about health benefits of red wine
- Even beer & hard liquor have been something to raise a glass to in certain medical circles

## But how healthy are they really?

- A chemical called **resveratrol** is found in high doses in red wine. That's one chemical that does seem to have some healthy benefits
- **Resveratrol** is an **antioxidant** that is found in certain nuts, berries & the skins of red grapes
- Several studies show the red wine may help ward off certain types of cancer, like prostate & lung cancers
- **Red wine** is the **only alcoholic beverage** found to contain a significant amount of the **resveratrol**



## How Healthy are Alcohol Beverages? (2)

- Alcohol in general may help to thin one's blood. Blood clots are what leads to heart disease & even strokes
- There's also an association between alcohol & increasing HDL, good cholesterol, also associated with decreasing risk of heart disease

### **But don't go on a bender to celebrate the good news!**

- Alcohol can still be dangerous if abused & it may be disappointing to learn that the amount of alcohol needed to get these healthy benefits is actually quite small
- **It's a four to five ounce glass of wine or one beer or only one ounce of liquor** limited for Women to 1 drink & for Men to 2 drinks
- **Less for women because** research tells us women generally retain higher concentrations of alcohol in their blood than men making women more susceptible to the toxins in alcohol



## How Healthy are Alcohol Beverages? (3)

If you're a drinker it's fine to have 1 to 2 drinks!

If you're not a drinker, don't start drinking just to get these healthy benefits because there are other ways to get these healthy benefits like:

- eating grapes
- drinking grape juice
- or eating peanuts, blue berries, raspberries & mulberries

What's important take away from these studies is that moderation is key

In large enough amounts, red wine can cause wicked hangovers & has been known to trigger migraines in some people

What's recommended is 1 to 2 drinks resulting in no hangover

If you're drinking above & beyond that, not only are you not getting the healthy benefits of red wine or the alcohol anymore, you're also damaging your body in other ways



# 12 Major Health Risks of Heavy Drinking

1. Anemia
2. Cancer
3. Cardiovascular Disease
4. Cirrhosis
5. Dementia
6. Depression
7. Seizures
8. High Blood Pressure
9. Gout
10. Infectious Disease
11. Nerve Damage
12. Pancreatitis



# Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse

The following symptoms are associated with alcohol abuse:

- Temporary blackouts or memory loss
- Recurrent arguments or fights with family members or friends as well as irritability, depression, or mood swings
- Continuing need to use alcohol to relax, to cheer up, to sleep, to deal with problems, or to feel "normal"
- Flushed skin & broken capillaries on the face
- Husky voice
- Trembling hands
- Bloody or black/tarry stools or vomiting blood
- Chronic diarrhea
- Drinking alone, in the mornings, or in secret
- Headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, or other unpleasant symptoms when you stop drinking



# What's Difference between Alcohol Abuse vs Alcohol Dependence

## With Alcohol Abuse:

- A person uses alcohol in excess but may not have regular cravings, a need to use daily, or withdrawal symptoms during sudden stoppage
- The person may often have heavy alcohol binge episodes separated by periods of not drinking

## With Alcohol Dependence:

- A person needs to drink regularly or even daily & drink more & more to get the same effects
- The person also experiences withdrawal symptoms if stops drinking & wants to quit drinking alcohol but can't



# How are Alcohol Problems Diagnosed?

- Alcohol problems may be diagnosed at a routine doctor visit or when you see your doctor for another problem
- If a partner or friend thinks you have an alcohol problem, he or she may urge you to see your doctor
- Your doctor will ask questions about your symptoms & past health, and will do a physical exam & sometimes a mental health assessment
- The mental health assessment checks to see whether you may have a mental health problem, such as depression
- Your doctor also may ask questions or do tests to look for health problems linked to alcohol, such as cirrhosis of the liver





## "Do I have a problem?"

Ask yourself the **CAGE** Questions:

- **C** – If you tried but failed to **C**ut down your drinking
- **A** – If you are **A**nnoyed by criticism from others about drinking
- **G** – If you feel **G**uilt about consequences of drinking (such as loss of job or relationship)
- **E** – If you've needed a drink or **E**ye-opener to steady your nerves or treat a hangover

If you answered "yes" to two or more of these questions, you could have a problem with alcohol



# Self-Screening Test for Alcoholism

No single symptom defines alcoholism, but honest answers to the following questions will help you decide if you are at risk:

1. Has a friend or relative ever suggested that you drink too much?
2. Is it hard to stop drinking after you have had one or two drinks?
3. Have you ever been unable to remember what you did during a drinking episode?
4. Do you ever feel bad about how much you drink?
5. Do you get into arguments or physical fights when you've been drinking?
6. Have you ever been arrested or hospitalized because of drinking?
7. Have you ever thought about getting help to control or stop your drinking?
8. Do you miss work or fail to complete obligations due to drinking?

If you answered yes to one or more questions, you may have a serious alcohol problem. For your own good, it's time to discuss the situation openly with your medical team



# How are Alcohol Problems Treated?

Treatment depends on how bad your alcohol problem is

- Some people are able to cut back to a moderate level of drinking with help from a counselor
- People who are addicted to alcohol may need medical treatment & may need to stay in a hospital or treatment center
- Your medical team may decide you need detoxification, or detox, before you start treatment
- You need detox when you are physically addicted to alcohol
- When you go through detox, you may need medicine to help with withdrawal symptoms
- After detox, you focus on staying alcohol-free or sober
- Most people receive some type of therapy, such as group counseling
- You also may need medicine to help you stay sober



## What to Do if You Have a Problem

If you have any of the symptoms listed so far & are unable to stop drinking on your own

- You need medical intervention to treat alcoholism
- You may also be susceptible to ailments such as alcoholic hepatitis, ulcers, cirrhosis, and heart disease

If you drink regularly & experience chronic or periodic depression

- You may be at risk of suicide.

If you have tried to stop drinking & experienced withdrawal symptoms such as headache, anxiety, insomnia, nausea, or delirium tremens (DTs) -You need medical attention **NOW!**



# What are Obstacle to Recovery from Alcohol Problems

Alcoholism is complicated by **denial**:

- Alcoholics employ a range of psychological maneuvers to blame their problems on something other than alcohol, creating significant barriers to recovery
- Alcoholic's continual craving for alcohol makes abstinence extremely difficult
- Historically, alcoholic behavior was blamed on a character flaw or weakness of will today chronic alcoholism is considered a disease that can afflict anyone
- Alcoholism is particularly insidious among young people & the elderly, in part because the symptoms are not easily recognized until the affected person becomes truly alcohol dependent



# How Can I Prevent Alcohol Relapse?

- Returning to drinking is a major problem for recovering alcoholics
- Preventing this may be difficult, but it can be supported by continued therapy, positive motivation & strong social support (such as AA)
- Because 70 % of alcoholics relapse after only psychosocial treatment, medications are also important in preventing alcohol abuse relapses

## **Other ways to prevent relapse include**

- Changing routines
- Accepting a new sense of values
- Avoiding activities or people associated with the drinking habit
- For example, 90% of alcoholics smoke. Alcoholics who stop smoking as well as drinking are more likely to achieve long-term abstinence - to say nothing of the other health benefits



## So Are You Ready to Deal with Your Problem with Alcohol Use?

- Our hope is that in reviewing these issues you are motivated to work on improving your approach to preventing or dealing with Alcohol Use in your life
- We hope you will be willing to work on your Alcohol Abuse prevention or treatment issues within the Support Services we offer here in your clinic.
- We look forward to working with you on your alcohol related issues