

# Dealing with Unhealthy Alcohol Use



## Alcohol Consumption Standards

Binge drinking, the most common form of excessive drinking, is defined as consuming:

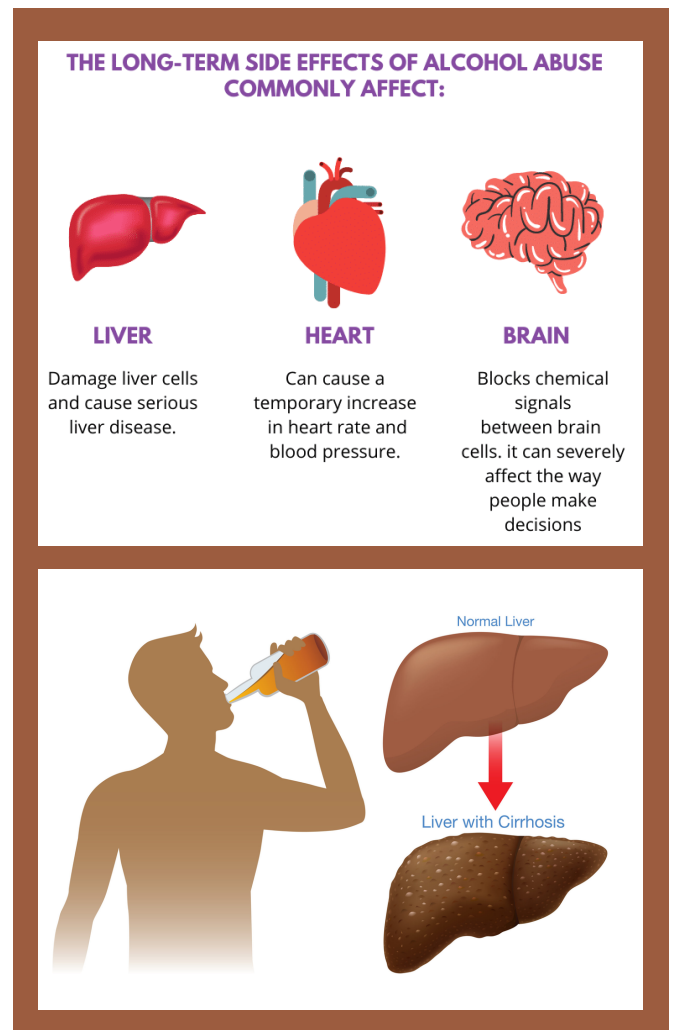
- For women, 4 or more drinks during a single occasion.
- For men, 5 or more drinks during a single occasion.

Heavy drinking is defined as consuming:

- For women, 8 or more drinks per week.
- For men, 15 or more drinks per week.

## The Consequences of Alcohol Abuse

- Cancer of the Esophagus
- Erectile Dysfunction
- Enlarged Veins called Varices of the Esophagus and Upper Stomach
- Heart and Liver Disease
- Damage to the Central Nervous System
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Inflamed Stomach Lining
- Weakened Immune System
- Memory and Learning problems
- Mental Health Issues including Anxiety and Depression
- Social Problems including Family and/or Job related Issues





## ***Tips for Maintaining Control***



- Put it in writing. Making a list of the reasons to curtail your drinking – such as feeling healthier, sleeping better, or improving your relationships – can motivate you.
- Set a drinking goal. Set a limit on how much you will drink. You should keep your drinking below the recommended guidelines: no more than one standard drink per day for women and for men ages 65 and older, and no more than two standard drinks per day for men under 65. These limits may be too high for people who have certain medical conditions or for some older adults. Your doctor can help you determine what's right for you.
- Keep a diary of your drinking. For three to four weeks, keep track of every time you have a drink. Include information about what and how much you drank as well as where you were. Compare this to your goal. If you're having trouble sticking to your goal, discuss it with your doctor or another health professional.
- Don't keep alcohol in your house. Having no alcohol at home can help limit your drinking.
- Drink slowly. Sip your drink. Drink soda, water, or juice after having an alcoholic beverage. Never drink on an empty stomach.
- Choose alcohol-free days. Decide not to drink a day or two each week. You may want to abstain for a week or a month to see how you feel physically and emotionally without alcohol in your life. Taking a break from alcohol can be a good way to start drinking less.
- Watch for peer pressure. Practice ways to say no politely. You do not have to drink just because others are, and you shouldn't feel obligated to accept every drink you're offered. Stay away from people who encourage you to drink.
- Keep busy. Take a walk, play sports, go out to eat, or catch a movie. When you're at home, pick up a new hobby or revisit an old one. Painting, board games, playing a musical instrument, woodworking – these and other activities are great alternatives to drinking.
- Ask for support. Cutting down on your drinking may not always be easy. Let friends and family members know that you need their support. Your doctor, counselor, or therapist may also be able to offer help.
- Stay out of risky situations. This may mean that you don't spend time with someone you used to use drugs with or go somewhere you used to drink. You might take a new way home from work, for example, to keep from going past your favorite old hangout.

- Guard against temptation. Steer clear of people and places that make you want to drink. If you associate drinking with certain events, such as holidays or vacations, develop a plan for managing them in advance. Monitor your feelings. When you're worried, lonely, or angry, you may be tempted to reach for a drink. Try to cultivate new, healthy ways to cope with stress.
- Be persistent. Most people who successfully cut down or stop drinking altogether do so only after several attempts. You'll probably have setbacks, but don't let them keep you from reaching your long-term goal. There's really no final endpoint, as the process usually requires ongoing effort.
- Get and keep your metaphorical "trauma trailer" cleaned out.

## ***Support Can Make All the Difference***

Having people who support you is a great way to reinforce your alcohol prevention strategies.

They can help you:

- Regulate your drinking
- Avoid triggers
- Create healthy coping mechanisms
- Hold you accountable if you drink
- Call healthcare professionals in case of emergencies

Resources are available in your area and include:

- Support groups
  - AA groups in Springdale include: The High Nooners Group, The Hi-Lifers, Springdale Zoom Group and the Way of Life Group - <https://www.nwarkaa.org/springdale/>
  - Celebrate Recovery Groups - <https://www.celebraterecovery.com/>
    - Revival Tabernacle Church - <https://revivaltabernaclechurch.com/>
    - Robinson Ave. Church of Christ - <https://rachurch.life/resources/>
- An intensive outpatient program such as True Self Recovery - <https://trueselfrecovery.com/>
- Inpatient programs such as the Center for Excellence.

