



Working TOWARD Wellness

LIVE BETTER. LIVE LONGER.

PROVIDED BY HEART HEALTH ACTION WINDSOR-ESSEX
AND THE WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH UNIT

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES ABOUT ALCOHOL



Most people who choose to drink alcohol are “Responsible Drinkers”. Generally speaking, people know that drinking too much alcohol is harmful. Unfortunately, there are still too many people who drink alcohol in ways that are harmful to themselves, their family and their community.

Alcohol sales in Canada are big business. Statistics Canada reports that Canadians purchased 2.6 billion litres of alcoholic beverages in 2000-2001. Beer continues to be the most popular alcoholic beverage purchased, followed by wine and spirits. Based on these sales, Canadians are

purchasing more alcohol than they did five years earlier, but overall much less than twenty-five years ago.

In medical terms, alcohol is classified as a drug that changes the way our body functions. Once it reaches the brain through the blood stream, we lose the ability to function normally, starting with poor judgment about our decisions. As more alcohol is consumed, other effects include loss of balance, slurred speech and blurred vision.

Alcohol abuse is serious business. In addition to many health issues, it can

lead to family problems, financial difficulties, violence, and drinking and driving consequences, such as loss of life, injuries, loss of driver’s license, higher insurance costs and a criminal record.

Read on for more information on drinking sensibly, low risk drinking guidelines and how to be a responsible host of parties or other work-related social functions.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE! T F

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|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Alcohol acts as a stimulant to your body’s central nervous system. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. As a host of a party or work-related social gathering where alcohol is available, you will not be held legally responsible for those present who are injured or harmed in any way. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Food slows down the rate at which alcohol is absorbed in the body. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. A “standard drink” of wine is 5 ounces or 142 mL (12% alcohol). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Binge drinking is having more than 8 drinks at one time at least twice a month. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Low Risk Drinking Guidelines (LRDG) describe how to drink a lot of alcohol without getting drunk. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Alcohol is one of the major causes of cirrhosis of the liver. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Speech is one of the first motor functions to be affected by alcohol. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Men should not drink more than 20 “standard drinks” per week as part of the LRDG. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Overuse of alcohol can lead to cardiovascular disease and some cancers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

see answers on back panel

Benefits of Drinking Alcohol Responsibly

In addition to being in control, here are some other benefits of drinking responsibly:

- Reduces the risk of being involved in a motor vehicle collision and being charged with impaired driving
- Reduces the risk for long term health conditions (e.g. heart disease, cancer and liver disease)
- Reduces the risk for short term physical and social problems (nausea and vomiting, blurred vision, poor judgment and bad decisions, etc.)
- Reduces legal responsibility of being the host of a party or other work-related social function
- Sets a good example for your children



Why BE CONCERNED ABOUT ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a drug that depresses or lowers the functioning of the central nervous system. Overuse can lead to dependence and even an early death!

Harmful effects include poor decision-making, impaired driving, alcohol-induced violence, cardiovascular disease, cancer and more. Chronic alcoholism is one of the major causes of cirrhosis of the liver.

Alcohol poisoning is another serious health effect. Signs include: nausea; vomiting; passing out; difficulty in

awakening; no reaction to pain; slow, shallow breathing and no reflexes. Alcohol poisoning can even lead to death.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) reports that 1 in 10 Canadians has a problem with alcohol. Consider these facts:

- More than 1/2 of all people convicted of violent crimes had been drinking shortly before committing the crime.
- Nearly 1/2 of all drivers killed in traffic crashes had been drinking.

- More than 1/4 of adults report binge drinking (drinking five or more drinks on one occasion) at least once a month.

The bottom line is that alcohol overuse can destroy the quality of a person's life in physical, emotional and financial terms as well as dramatically affect the lives of all those around them.



How TO DRINK SENSIBLY

If you follow the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines (see What are the "Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines"?), you will likely prevent the usual problems associated with drinking alcohol. These guidelines are for people of legal drinking age.

Although these guidelines are intended to reduce the harm that can occur with using alcohol, there are some people who should not drink alcohol. This group includes women who are pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding.

Also, those who need to be alert should not be under the influence of alcohol (e.g. while operating heavy equipment or vehicles, being responsible for the safety of others at work or at home, etc.).

If you are wondering whether or not you should drink less than you do now, or not drink at all, talk to a qualified health care professional.

A STANDARD DRINK IS...

In these times of super-sized fries, we sometimes see super-sized drinks as well. In order to follow the recommended guidelines, you need to know what is meant by a "standard drink".

1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol



source: CAMH, 2000.

Consuming larger drinks or drinks that contain a higher percentage of alcohol need to be considered when following the LRDG.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Eating a large meal before you begin drinking alcohol will not prevent you from becoming impaired. Food in your stomach will slow down the absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream but it will not prevent the effects of the alcohol.

Some people also believe that drinking a strong cup of coffee will "sober them up". However, coffee does not remove alcohol from your body - only time can do that!

DRINKING & DRIVING

Sensible drinking always includes driving sober. If you are planning to drink alcohol, be sure to plan ahead on what to do to get home safely.

Here are some sensible options:

- Arrange to have a designated driver available to drive you home.
- Call home for someone to pick you up.
- Take a cab or use public transit.
- Stay overnight at a friends' or at a motel.

What ARE THE "LOW-RISK DRINKING GUIDELINES"?

These are guidelines to help people make informed decisions about the amount of alcohol they drink. The guidelines recommend:

- No more than 2 "standard drinks" on any one day.
- No more than 9 standard drinks per week (women).
- No more than 14 standard drinks per week (men).
- While drinking, eat healthy snacks to help slow down alcohol absorption.

- Wait at least one hour between drinks.
- Drink non-alcoholic beverages such as water, fruit juice or soft drinks.

Although small amounts of alcohol may have some health benefits for some people, if you don't drink, don't start! Choosing not to drink is the best way to ensure that you are not at risk of having alcohol-related problems. If you want to improve your health, you are better off eating a healthier diet, being more physically active and giving up smoking.



Go for it!

RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

ALCOHOL • DRUGS • GAMBLING

Windsor FOCUS Community
519-254-6116
www.windsorfocus.com

The Committee to End Abuse of Substances in Essex County (C.E.A.S.E.)
Substance Abuse Resource Guide
www.wehealthunit.org
(Click on "Healthy Living", then "Alcohol")

Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO)
www.lcbo.com

RCMP
Brochure on alcohol and drug policies for the workplace
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pdfs/winbrochure.pdf

Essex County Addiction Assessment Referral Service, Windsor Regional Hospital
519-257-5125

Problem Gambling Services
519-254-2112

Drug and Alcohol Treatment Info. line
1-800-565-8603
www.dart.on.ca

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD)
519-253-6233
www.madd.ca

Healthy Ontario
www.healthyontario.com
(Search for information on alcohol)

www.wehealthunit.org and at
www.windsor-heart-health.com

RESPONSIBLE HOSTING

When you are hosting a party at home, at work or any other place, you can be held legally responsible for injuries or damages that occur as a result of the alcohol you provide. This may also include being responsible for your guests' safety and behaviour until they are sober, not just until they leave your party.

Here are some suggestions from CAMH that can reduce your risk as a host:

- Don't plan physical activities when you serve alcohol. People are more prone to injuries when they are drinking.
- Have low-alcohol and alcohol-free cocktails (mocktails) available.
- Serve drinks yourself instead of having an open bar so that guests may drink less.
- Serve healthy snacks to help avoid drinking on an empty stomach. Try veggies with low fat dips and cheese, whole grain crackers, etc.

- Be prepared for overnight guests.
- Plan to deal with guests who drink too much. Before the party gets going, ask someone to be prepared to help you.
- Find out how guests will be going home from your party. Be prepared to take away car keys. Know who the designated drivers are, and have cash and phone numbers ready for taxis.
- Stop serving alcohol a few hours before the party is over. Bring out more alcohol-free drinks and food.

Finally, as the host, you should drink responsibly so that you can ensure the safety of yourself and others, as well as have a good time.

THE GOOD NEWS IS...

Many people do make sensible decisions when it comes to drinking and driving, and drinking in social situations. Hopefully, these people will continue to influence others to drink responsibly as well.

CLIP & KEEP THIS INFO!

Celebrate with Mocktails

Mocktails are alcohol-free beverages, each with their own look and taste. Drinking and/or serving mocktails is a good idea to help:

- reduce overall intake of alcohol
- reduce your liability as a host
- show your children that alcohol does not have to be present at a celebration in order to have fun
- provide drinks that anyone at your party can have, including children, designated drivers or guests who simply choose not to drink alcohol.

Here is a recipe for a tasty and warming mocktail that is also nutritious.



Tropical Heat with Spicy Cinnamon

Cranberry juice	1 litre (4 cups)
Pineapple juice	1 litre (4 cups)
Water	250 mL (1 cup)
Salt	Pinch
Cinnamon	2.5 mL (1/2 tsp)
Ground cloves	3 mL (3/4 tsp)
Nutmeg	1.3 mL (1/4 tsp)
Allspice	2.5 mL (1/2 tsp)
Cinnamon sticks	10

Combine spices and water in a pot. Stir and bring to a boil. Add fruit juices and reheat just to boiling point. Serve hot with a cinnamon stick stirrer in each cup.

Pass it on!

Please feel free to copy any articles in this brochure as long as you acknowledge the source.

Make it happen at your workplace!

Here are some suggestions to promote and support responsible use of alcohol and the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines (LRDG):

- Post information on bulletin boards or distribute information to employees that identifies the LRDG.
- Offer an education session to employees on how to talk to your kids about alcohol and drugs.
- Hold a Mocktail Recipe Contest, then compile and distribute the recipes among all employees.
- Consider developing a workplace policy that outlines how to run workplace related social functions if alcohol will be available. Include the suggestions listed under "Responsible Hosting" to reduce risk of harm or injury for those attending the gathering, as well as to reduce legal liability for the host.
- Consider developing a policy that outlines how to deal with employees who choose to drink during working hours to ensure their safety as well as the safety of their co-workers and the rest of the community.

*"Always do sober what you would do drunk.
That will teach you to keep your mouth shut"*

Ernest Hemmingway

Here's another mocktail recipe to offer guests at your next social gathering.

Holiday Splash

4 servings

A colourful drink with a sophisticated taste.

Ice

Orange juice 375 mL (12 ounces)

Sweetened lime juice 250 mL (1 cup)

Fresh lime juice 1 lime

Cranberry juice 125 mL (4 ounces)

Lemon or lime soft drink 180 mL (6 ounces)

Put ice in four tumblers

or wine glasses.

Combine liquids and

pour.

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Answers (from front page): 1-F • 2-F • 3-T • 4-T • 5-F • 6-F • 7-T • 8-T • 9-F • 10-T

For more information about the Workplace Health Promotion Program,
contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 258-2146 x 3100



This brochure and others in this series available online at:
www.wehealthunit.org and at www.windsor-heart-health.com