

ARE YOU AT RISK?

QUIKRISK™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

Scoring the following statements can help measure your risk for an alcohol problem.

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
<i>I drink alone or in secret.</i>	10	5	0
<i>I tend to have drinks before, with or after dinner and become annoyed when I can't.</i>	10	5	0
<i>I experience withdrawal symptoms (nausea, sweating or shaking) if I don't drink.</i>	10	5	0
<i>I have "blackout" periods when I can't recall conversation or activities while drinking.</i>	10	5	0
		Yes	No
<i>I need an increasing number of drinks to feel alcohol's effects.</i>	10 pts		0 pts
<i>I keep alcohol in unlikely places at home, at work or in the car.</i>	10 pts		0 pts
<i>I get annoyed when others comment on or criticize my drinking habits.</i>	10 pts		0 pts
<i>I've lost interest in activities or hobbies that I used to enjoy.</i>	10 pts		0 pts
<i>I have increasing problems with relationships, employment and legal or financial issues since my drinking has increased.</i>	10 pts		0 pts

ADD UP YOUR POINTS

If you scored 3-20 points, you probably have an alcohol problem.

If your total was 25-50, you may have a serious problem with alcohol and should discuss it with your health care provider.

If you scored 55-75 points, your health and safety may be at risk and you should seek help right away.

If you scored 80-100, talk to your health care provider now, and know that treatment can help.

In fact, if you scored a 10 for even one statement you may have a problem with alcohol. **The bottom line:** If you wonder whether you drink too much, you probably do.

NOTE: This self-assessment is intended only to raise awareness. See your primary health care provider for a full evaluation of your alcohol use.

HELPING YOURSELF Out of Alcohol Abuse

You don't need to address an alcohol problem on your own, nor should you. But there are healthy habits you can develop now to help you start to replace an unhealthy alcohol habit. **Ideas:**

- Avoid hanging out with other alcohol abusers. **Try to spend time with nondrinkers** or others who use alcohol responsibly.
- **Get rid of any alcoholic beverages** in your home.
- When you feel the need to have a drink, **find something positive to do** instead. Call a friend, go for a walk or play with the dog.
- To **cope with negative emotions** — minus the health risks of alcohol abuse — give yourself a mental boost every day with exercise.



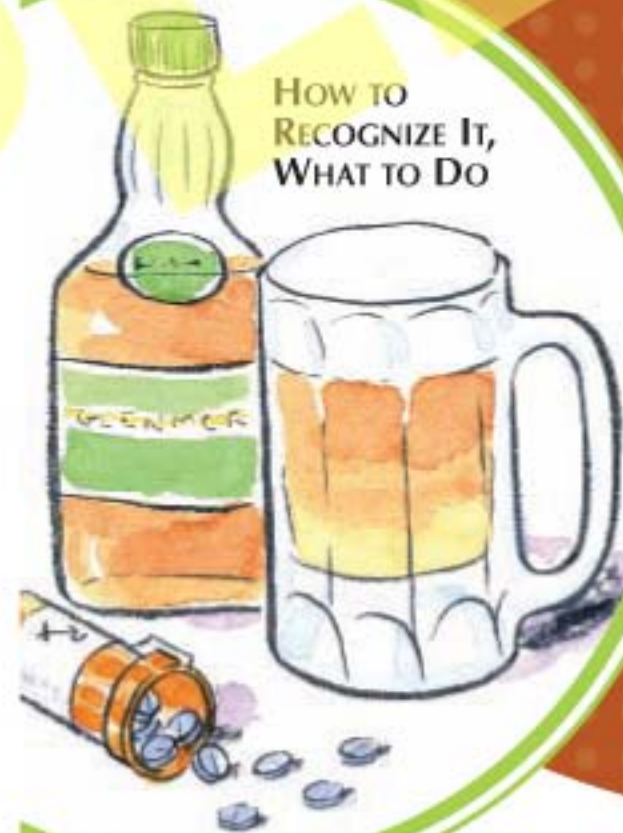
HELPFUL RESOURCES for Alcohol and Drugs

- Alcoholics Anonymous (U.S. and Canada), check local directories or www.aa.org
- American Council on Alcoholism, 1-800-527-5344
- National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency, 1-800-622-2255
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, www.niaaa.nih.gov
- National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1-800-662-4357

Remember, alcohol abuse or drug addiction is a common problem — you're not alone — and it can be overcome. Don't delay seeking help for you or someone you love. A longer, fuller, happier life could be around the corner.

ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE

HOW TO RECOGNIZE IT, WHAT TO DO



IS THERE A PROBLEM?

You may not think of alcohol as a drug, but in fact it is the most common drug of abuse. Recovery from alcohol addiction can differ from other addictions, although some of the signs of abuse can be similar.



ALCOHOL: Crossing the Line

Alcohol abuse can be a gateway to other forms of drug abuse. Why can some people drink without ill effects and others drink and become addicted? After decades of study, scientists still don't fully understand alcohol addiction, or alcoholism. It's a complex disease involving heredity, brain chemistry and environment. Once physical and psychological dependence occurs, alcohol becomes part of the body's chemistry, ultimately controlling behavior and thinking.

How do you know if someone is an alcoholic? Signs include drinking heavily every day, often secretly, as the need for alcohol increases. Alcoholics may withdraw from other interests and people as more of their time is spent drinking. They may struggle to control their drinking with periods of abstinence, but the urge to drink eventually overwhelms their desire to stop. This progression varies from person to person.

What About YOU?

You don't have to be alcoholic to suffer from an alcohol problem. "Alcohol abuse" means you engage in excessive drinking that results in health or social problems, but you aren't dependent on alcohol and haven't fully lost control over the use of alcohol. Alcohol abuse isn't addiction but nevertheless can have many adverse effects on your health and safety.

If you consume alcohol beyond moderate levels — 1 drink a day for women, 2 drinks for men — it's time to assess your drinking habit and do something about it. The self-evaluation in this brochure is a good place to start.

Why STOP or CUT BACK the Drinking?

Alcohol is a mind-altering drug with a wide range of health damaging effects. Even small amounts can cause blurred vision, slowed reaction time, drowsiness, indigestion or gastritis, headache, insomnia and fatigue. And a woman who drinks during pregnancy risks serious harm to her unborn child.

Prolonged heavy alcohol use can cause:

- Depression and anxiety
- High blood pressure and heart problems
- Impaired memory and learning ability
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Fatigue and general ill health
- Weakened immunity
- Impotence in men
- Increased risk of cancers of the breast, mouth, lungs, esophagus, stomach, colon and pancreas

DRUGS: Over-the-Counter and Prescription ALERT

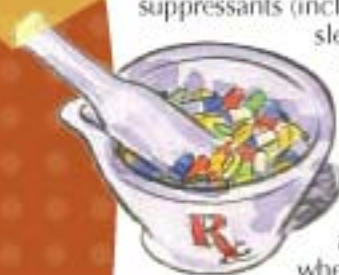
Drug addicts come in many forms — users of illicit substances such as methamphetamine, cocaine and crack and those who more quietly abuse prescription medication and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

Experts say medication abuse is a growing problem — most often with pain killers; medications used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders; and stimulants prescribed to treat the sleep disorder narcolepsy and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

OTC medicines, such as certain cough suppressants (including dextromethorphan); sleep aids such as doxylamine; antihistamines such as diphenhydramine; and dimenhydrinate (as in motion sickness relievers) can be abused for their psychoactive effects. Most of these drugs are particularly dangerous when combined with alcohol.

If you take medication, make sure you:

- follow the prescribed directions
- be aware of potential interactions with other drugs



Do you use alcohol or medication to cope with negative emotions and stress? "Self-medicating" is a widespread practice. If you have persistent stress or depression, talk to your health care provider.



Defining "a Drink"

A standard drink is about 10 ounces of beer (less than a bottle, which is 12 fluid ounces), 4 ounces of wine or 1 ounce of spirits.

- never stop or change your dosing regimen without first discussing it with your health care provider
- never use another person's prescription

Tell your health care provider about any medication, or dietary or herbal supplement you are taking. And if you think you have a problem, let your provider know.

Warning sign: Prescription drug abusers often "doctor shop" — move from health provider to health provider in an effort to get multiple prescriptions for the drug they abuse.

NOTHING CASUAL About Using Drugs

Most people do not intend to become drug addicts when they experiment with a drug. Drug misuse or abuse starts out voluntary and controllable, but addiction can quickly result.

Do you suspect someone may be using drugs? You may notice the following personality changes. The person may become ...

- verbally and physically abusive
- act paranoid, confused and extremely moody
- seem depressed and withdrawn
- become more secretive about his or her activities
- start stealing possessions or "losing" things that were once valued
- seem to have a lot of money or often ask to borrow money