

*Programs are open to all regardless of insurance, unless otherwise noted\**

## Alcohol Awareness Month



April is Alcohol Awareness Health Awareness Month.

Alcohol is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. About 95,000 Americans die from alcohol-related causes each year. If you're like many Americans, you drink alcohol occasionally when socializing with family and friends. For many, moderate drinking is probably safe. Moderate drinking is defined, by the CDC, as one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men. But because drinking too much can be harmful, it's important to know how alcohol may affect your life, your loved ones and your community and how much is too much. It is also important to realize that moderate drinking levels are *not* necessarily safe for everyone. If you have questions, talk to your doctor to find out what a safe amount of alcohol consumption is for you. And, participate in these activities throughout the month to learn more about safer drinking.

### Activity #1 – Move with a Doc, Tuesday, April 12 at Noon

From grand celebrations to dinner with friends—for some, a few drinks often turn into more, but for others, it's easy to put down the glass. Join Dr. Shah in our Move with a Doc series to learn about the side effects of alcohol, including the physical, mental and social impacts. Use this as an opportunity to learn and move your body (in any way you choose) while you listen! Click [here](#) to register. Missed the live webinar? Check out the [video library](#) and scroll to the Move with a Doc section.

### Activity #2 – Alcohol Use Fact Sheet

Do you know the definition of a standard drink? Did you know that one glass doesn't always equal one drink? Read through the alcohol use fact sheet on page 2, for some startling statistics and facts about alcohol use.

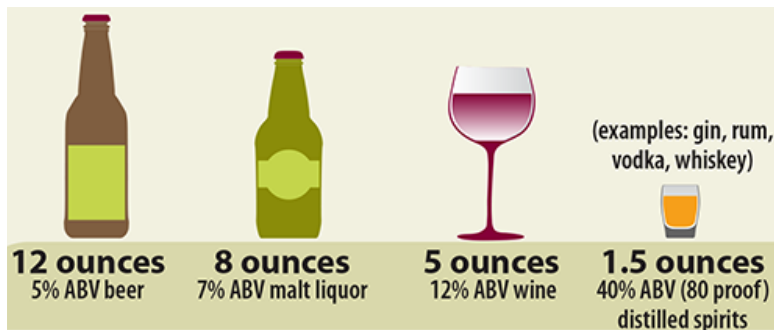
### Activity #3 – Check Your Drinking & Getting Help

Are your drinking habits safe, risky or harmful? Take this [self-assessment](#) for yourself or share this with someone you care about. If you think you or someone you know may have a drinking problem, you are not alone. Review the resources and support that are available on page 3. In addition, if you are not sure how to start a conversation or what to say to someone who you care about that you might think has a drinking problem, see page 3 for some suggestions.

For questions or more information, please email [wellness@wellfirstbenefits.com](mailto:wellness@wellfirstbenefits.com)

# Alcohol Use Fact Sheet

- 85.6% of people ages 18 older reported that they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime.
- Every day in America, 29 people die from drunk driving crashes—that is one person every 50 minutes.
- Excessive alcohol use costs the American economy \$249 billion.
- By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 61.5% of teenagers have abused alcohol.
- 25.6% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have abused alcohol at least once.
- 60% of people increased their alcohol consumption during COVID-19 lockdowns.
  - Reasons for increased drinking include increased stress (45.7%), increased alcohol availability (34.4%) and boredom (30.1%).
- The difference between normal use and addiction is someone who is not addicted will not have cravings, or be obsessed about how to get the next drink, or feel the need to use alcohol to get through the day. With addiction, using alcohol continues despite there being negative consequences in their from that ongoing use, and there is a reliance on alcohol to feel “normal.”
- Per the CDC, a standard drink is defined as any drink that contains 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. The percentage, expressed as alcohol by volume (ABV), varies within and across beverage types. Some examples of **one standard drink** include:



Source: [CDC](#)

- One glass, bottle or container is not always the same as one drink. Drinks are often made, sold and served in containers that are more than one standard drink. For example, craft beers come in 16oz or 20oz containers and may have very high alcohol content. Craft cocktails often contain more than one spirit and/or liqueur. In both examples, one glass is one and a half, two or even three standard drinks.
- Excessive alcohol use can have immediate and long-term health consequences. The immediate consequences are most often the result of binge drinking. Binge drinking is commonly defined as consuming four or more drinks during a single occasion for women and five or more drinks during a single occasion for men.
  - Short-term health risks include injuries (motor vehicle crashes, burns, falls), violence (homicide, suicide, sexual assault), alcohol poisoning, risky sexual behaviors (unprotected sex, sex with multiple partners).
  - Long-term health risks include chronic disease and life-threatening problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, liver failure, dementia, depression, anxiety, and increased risk of certain types of cancer (e.g. head and neck, esophageal, liver, breast and colorectal).

Statistic Sources: [Partners in Prevention](#) ; [CDC-Impaired driving](#) ; [CDC-fact sheet](#); [National center for drug abuse](#)

# Resources and Support

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## Resources and support from WellFirst Health, SSM Health and the community:

- Contact your primary care provider.
- Ask if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program. (You do not have to disclose why and what you share with your EAP is confidential).
- WellFirst Health's [behavioral health and substance use case management](#).\*
- SSM Health's [inpatient and outpatient treatment](#).\*
- Find an [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) meeting (AA) near you.
- If you want to reduce your alcohol consumption, use this [Real Goal](#) to help you start.
- Reach out to a close family member or friend for support.

## How to talk to someone about their drinking:

Firstly, drinking problems are not measured by the amount someone drinks or how often, but what matters most is how drinking affects the person's life. For example, your loved one may have a drinking problem if they cannot cut back on drinking; are having trouble at work, home, school, or relationships; or are missing work, school or social activities because of alcohol use.

Secondly, talking about alcohol takes courage. If you are concerned, don't wait to bring it up as the problem will likely get worse, not better. Approach the person with a sense of curiosity. The use of questions increases the chance of a discussion, making the person feel less like they are being accused or attacked. Also, think about who you are talking to; what kind of context or situation would be best to try and start this conversation?

Some possible questions to ask:

- I've been wondering if you think I/you/we...
  - have been drinking more lately?
  - are drinking too much?
  - are having any problems because of drinking?
  - should take a break from drinking?
- What do you think would happen if I/you/we took a break from drinking?
- Have you ever thought I/you/we drink too much?
- Do you know anybody you think drinks too much; if so, why do you believe that?
- What do you think people get out of drinking, or why do some individuals drink more than others?

For additional information on talking to someone about their drinking, refer to [helping a loved with a drinking problem](#).