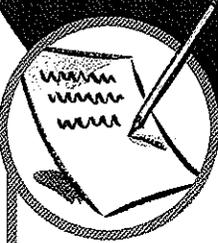


# ARE YOU AT RISK?



## 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 feel a need to drink.</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 conversations 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've had increasing problems with relationships, employment and legal or financial issues since I have started drinking more.</i>	10 pts	0 pts	

### ADD UP YOUR POINTS

If you scored 15-20 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:**

**Spend time with nondrinkers** or others who use alcohol responsibly. Avoid hanging out with alcohol abusers.

**Get rid** of alcoholic beverages in your home.

**Find something positive** to do when you feel the need to have a drink. Call a friend, go for a walk or play with the dog. Know what situations trigger an urge to drink and avoid them.



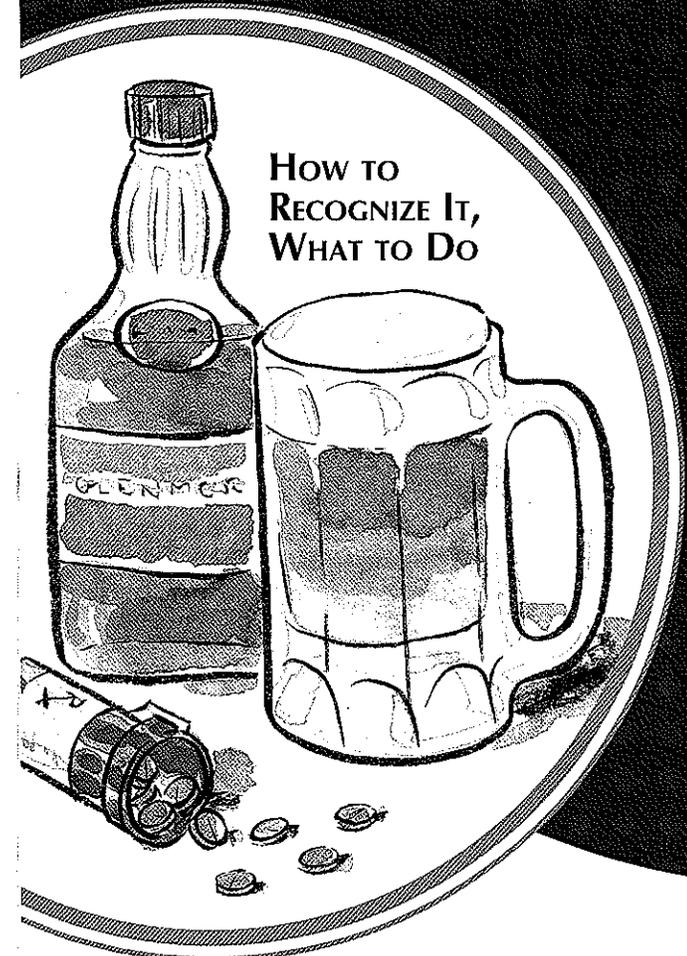
**To cope with negative emotions**, give yourself a mental boost every day with exercise. If negative emotions keep you down and begin to interfere with daily life, talk to your health care provider about anxiety or depression.

**Reduce your alcohol dependence** by drinking within limits at first, and set days that you don't drink. Seek help with these goals if they're difficult for you to achieve on your own. Be ready to say "no."

**Join others.** Alcoholics Anonymous or another mutual support group is a way to have a network of friends who have found ways to live without alcohol. If you're dependent on alcohol and decide to stop drinking completely, get help. Sudden withdrawal from heavy drinking may cause dangerous side effects such as seizures. See your health care provider to plan a safe recovery.

**Alcohol abuse is a common problem — you're not alone. Don't delay seeking help. A longer, fuller and 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 that of 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 an 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 — one drink a day for women, two drinks for men — it's time to assess your drinking habit and do something about it. The self-evaluation on the facing panel 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, headache, insomnia and fatigue. And a woman who drinks during pregnancy risks serious harm to her unborn child.

### Health problems related to alcohol:

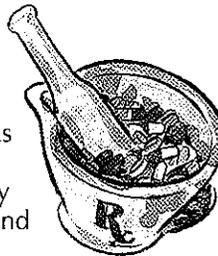
- Altered judgment, which can lead to car crashes, worksite accidents and domestic violence
- Addiction (alcoholism)
- Weight gain. Alcohol is almost as high in calories as fat.
- Liver disease and stomach ulcers
- Increased risk for cancers of the breast, mouth, lungs, esophagus, stomach, colon, pancreas and urinary tract
- An enlarged or weakened heart
- High blood pressure and stroke
- Anxiety and depression
- Disrupted sleep cycle, resulting in daytime fatigue
- Impaired memory and dementia
- Drug interactions with many medications

## 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 medications and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.

Experts say medication abuse is a growing problem — most often with painkillers; 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.



*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 generally considered to be 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits. Each of these drinks contains roughly the same amount of absolute alcohol — approximately 0.5 ounce or 12 grams.

### If you take medication:

- Follow the prescribed directions.
- Be aware of potential interactions with other drugs.
- 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 prescription or over-the-counter 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 use is voluntary and controllable at first, 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.