



IS YOUR COCKTAIL HOUR *Turning Toxic?*

Birthdays, parties, special occasions or just at dinner—there's usually plenty of occasions and reasons to raise your glass. Unfortunately, many American adults may be overdoing it. According to a National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 26.9 percent of people ages 18 or older reported binge drinking on at least one occasion a month and 7 percent reported that they engaged in heavy alcohol use on a monthly basis.

Excessive alcohol intake can increase your risk for several chronic conditions, including liver disease and some cancers. Alcohol abuse can also have a negative impact on your job, relationships and safety—both yours and those around you.

KEEP YOUR COCKTAILS IN CHECK

If you drink, the following tips can help ensure you're not overdoing it, and only drinking in moderation.

Track your drinking. You may be drinking a lot

without realizing it. Every time you have a drink, write down the day, time, location, and how much. Do this for a few weeks or a month. This journal will help you become mindful of your drinking as well as help you identify how much you may need to cut down.

Set goals and limits. Based off your tracking, set goals and limits to your drinking. If you drink daily, you may want to pick a day or two during the week not to drink. Or you may want to completely abstain for a week or longer. Taking a break from alcohol can be a good way to start drinking less.

Follow “best practices” when you drink. When you drink, follow these strategies:

- » Drink slowly; sip your drink
- » Drink water before and after having an alcoholic beverage
- » Don't drink on an empty stomach

Go public and ask for support. Let friends and family members know that you're making an effort to drink less. Ask for their support during this time. Letting them know can help reduce temptation (i.e., they will be less inclined to invite you out for drinks or offer you drinks).

Expect setbacks, but don't give up. As with trying to form any habit, it's common to have a setback. It often takes several attempts to successfully cut down or stop drinking altogether—so stick with it.

If you're still finding it difficult to cut back on your drinking contact your doctor or health care provider.

WHAT'S MODERATE?

Moderate drinking is defined as no more than 1 drink per day for women and no more than 2 drinks per day for men.

WHAT COUNTS AS A DRINK?

- » 1 can of beer (12 oz)
- » 1 glass of wine (5 oz)
- » 1 shot of liquor (1.5 oz)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines binge drinking as five or more alcoholic drinks for males or four or more alcoholic drinks for females on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least one day in the past month. SAMHSA defines heavy alcohol use as binge drinking on five or more days in the past month.

Source: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>

