

Facts on Alcohol and Older Adults

What is moderate drinking?

One drink a day for women—any age
One drink a day for men over the age of 65
Two drinks a day for men before age 65.*

What is one drink?

1 shot of distilled liquor
5 ounces of wine
12 ounces of regular beer

Risks of moderate drinking for older adult:

Adverse effects when taken with medications
The liver processes alcohol more slowly
Frequent falls
High blood pressure and other health problems
Stroke

Risks of heavy drinking:

Malnourishment
Alcohol and drugs remain in body longer
Cirrhosis of liver or hepatitis
Inflammation of pancreas
Damage to brain and heart
Increased risk for many cancers

Warning Signs of a Drinking Problem:

- Drinking to calm nerves
- Losing interest in food
- Lying about or trying to hide drinking habits
- Drinking alone more often
- Getting drunk more than three or four times a year
- Needing more alcohol to get the buzz
- Feeling irritable when not drinking
- Having medical, social or financial problems as a result of drinking

People who are socially isolated or clinically depressed are particularly vulnerable.

Alcoholism is treatable when recognized or detected.

*National Institute of Health

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