

APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

Get the facts about aging and alcohol

As people age, they may become more sensitive to alcohol's effects. The same amount of alcohol can have a greater effect on an older person than on someone who is younger. Over time, someone whose drinking habits haven't changed may find she or he has a problem.

Did you know?

Older women can have problems with alcohol. In fact, they are more sensitive than men to the effects of alcohol.

Heavy drinking can make some health problems worse. It is important to talk to your doctor if you have problems like high blood sugar (diabetes). Heavy drinking can also cause health problems such as weak bones (osteoporosis).

Older adults are more likely to have health problems that can be made worse by alcohol. Some of these health problems are:

- stroke
- high blood pressure
- memory loss mood disorders

Medicines and alcohol don't mix

Many prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal remedies can be dangerous or even deadly when mixed with alcohol. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist if you can safely drink alcohol. Read the labels on all of your medicines. Some labels say, "Do not use with alcohol."

Some problems mixing medicine and alcohol:

- Taking aspirin and drinking alcohol can raise the chance of bleeding in your stomach.
- You can get very sleepy if you drink alcohol and take cold or allergy medicines.
- Some cough syrups have a high amount of alcohol in them.
- Drinking alcohol while taking some sleeping pills, pain pills, or anxiety or depression medicine can be very dangerous.
- You can hurt your liver if you drink and take a lot of painkillers that have the word "acetaminophen" on the label. Always check the warning labels.

Facts about alcohol and aging:

- You can become more sensitive to alcohol as you get older.
- Heavy drinking can make some health problems worse.
- Medicines and alcohol don't mix.

There may be many reasons to stop drinking

Check off any reasons that sound true for you.

I would like to quit drinking because:

- ◇ I want to be healthy by keeping my high blood sugar (diabetes) under control.
- ◇ I want to lower my blood pressure.
- ◇ I want to keep my liver working right.
- ◇ I don't want to hurt anyone by driving after I've been drinking.
- ◇ I don't want to fall and hurt myself.
- ◇ I'm tired of feeling sleepy or sick the morning after I drink.
- ◇ I want to enjoy the things I used to do.
- ◇ I want to stop feeling embarrassed about how I act when drinking.
- ◇ List other reasons here:

Some people can cut back on their drinking. Some people need to stop drinking altogether. Making a change in your drinking habits can be hard. Don't give up! If you do not reach your goal the first time, try again. Ask your family and friends for help. Talk to your doctor if you are having trouble quitting. **Get the help you need.**

