



**Together
we can**

TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL

Adult guidelines for low-risk alcohol use

Choosing whether, when and how much to drink is a personal decision for adults. It is important that you remember that your choices can affect the health and safety of yourself and others.

Addiction to alcohol, known as alcoholism, is a progressive disease. In 2004, more than 15 million Americans ages 12 or older were diagnosed as being dependent or had abused alcohol.

More than one-half of American adults have direct family

experience with alcohol problems, which cost Americans more than 100,000 lives and approximately \$185 billion each year.

Tips for low-risk drinking

- › Be sure that your drinks don't exceed the standard size (see below).
- › Drink slowly – one drink per hour.
- › Drink alcohol with food and nonalcoholic beverages.
- › Don't drink and drive, use machinery or combine alcohol with other medication.
- › People with a family history of alcoholism or a prior history of alcohol abuse are at increased risk for alcoholism.
- › Pregnant women or women trying to become pregnant should not drink at all. Drinking during pregnancy can harm the growth and development of the fetus.

Moderate alcohol use generally does not result in health problems for most adults. Moderate use for women is no more than one standard drink a day. Moderate use for men is no more than two standard drinks a day.

A standard drink is:

- › 12 ounces of regular beer (5% alcohol)
- › 1.5 ounces of 80-proof

- › distilled spirits (40% alcohol)
- › 5 ounces of wine (12% alcohol)

How can you tell if someone has a problem?

Answering the following four questions can help you find out if you or a loved one has a drinking problem:

- › Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
- › Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- › Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
- › Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

One "yes" answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. More than one "yes" answer means it is highly likely that a problem exists.

Where to find help

Treatment for alcohol abuse and alcoholism works! A list of treatment programs in Vermont can be found at the Vermont Department of Health website (<http://healthvermont.gov>) Alcohol and Drug Abuse section.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month.



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For more information please visit the Vermont Department of Health website at:

<http://healthvermont.gov>