



5 Smart Steps to Safer Drinking

1. Make Choices.

Safer drinking means making choices. It takes thinking and planning.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind:

- **Decide how you're going to drink** *before* you are in a drinking situation. A single drink can lower your judgment.
- **Make a choice each time you drink.** Just because you drink in one setting doesn't mean you have to drink in every situation.
- **It's not all or nothing.** You can drink a beer and switch to soda or vice versa.
- **Talk with friends** about your choice. Support each other's decisions.

2. Learn About Alcohol.

Serving size does matter. Each of the following contains the same amount of alcohol:

- A 12-ounce can of beer
- A 4-ounce glass of wine
- A 10-ounce wine cooler
- A 1-ounce shot of 100-proof liquor (straight or in a mixed drink)

Your gender and body size affects how fast your body digests alcohol. On average, a 150-pound man can safely have one drink per hour. A 150-pound woman will need to drink a little more slowly than that.

3. Know Your Limits.

Many things can affect your reaction. As a general rule, drinking will affect you more quickly:

- The less you weigh
- If you have eaten little or no food
- If you have been ill
- If you are taking prescription medicine or any other drug (Combining drugs—even over the counter drugs—can be very dangerous!)

4. Have A Plan.

Here are some guidelines:

- Drink slowly. Don't gulp your drink down.
- Allow time between drinks.

- Eat food before you drink. Eat with your drink.
- Drink water, soda, or juice between alcoholic drinks.
- Stop when you've reached your limit.
- Don't mix drinking and driving.
- Plan how you will get home.

Only time removes alcohol from your body. You can't sober up with coffee, fresh air, or a shower.

5. Watch For Problems.

Alcoholism is a disease that makes the body unable to process alcohol in a healthy way. Some people can't use alcohol moderately.

You may need help if:

- Drinking is more important than being with your friends.
- You gulp alcohol and keep drinking more and more.
- There's a big change in your behavior after only a little alcohol.
- You want to drink often or all the time.
- You find yourself sneaking drinks or hiding your drinking.
- You continue to drink after punishment and education.
- You continue to drink even if it hurts a close friend or loved one.