

Alcohol & Your Health: What Are the Risks?

The Damage You Can't Always See



If you have a long-term health condition, alcohol can make it worse. For example, if you have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure, drinking any amount of alcohol can make your condition worse.

Tell your health care providers about your drinking habits. Being open and honest will help them to understand you as a person and recommend the best treatment choices for you.

Cancer

- Alcohol increases your risk of cancer.
- Drinking too much alcohol increases your risk for developing cancers of the:
 - Mouth
 - Breast
 - Throat
 - Liver
 - Colon

Arms & Legs

- Swelling
- Pain and tingling
- Body shakes or tremors

Liver & Pancreas

- Liver Disease/Failure
- Wasting away of Liver (Cirrhosis)
- Injury to the Pancreas (Pancreatitis)

Digestive System

- Heartburn
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Bleeding from esophagus or stomach

Brain

- Mood and behavior changes
- Learning and memory problems
- Poor balance and reaction time

Lungs & Heart

- Lung infection (Pneumonia)
- High blood pressure
- Weakening of heart muscle
- Irregular heart beat
- Heart attack
- Stroke

Sexual & Reproductive Health

Men

- Low sex drive
- Not able to have an erection

Women

- Periods that last longer than normal
- No period at all

Risky sexual behaviors, like unprotected sex

- Sexually transmitted infections
- Unplanned pregnancy

Reduce a couple's chances of getting pregnant

Drinking during pregnancy

- Birth defects
- Miscarriage
- Premature birth



St. Croix Regional
Family Health Center



TIME TO ASK

www.stcroixhealthcenter.org

Getting Help:

Find Local Support Groups & Programs in Maine

Your primary Care provider has participated in the Time to Ask Alcohol Education Program. Having open, honest conversations with your provider about alcohol use can best guide them in helping you make decisions about your lifestyle and medical treatment. Your health care provider may be able to make suggestions for how to manage your alcohol consumption or connect you with community resources.

Connect with the Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) at St. Croix Regional Family Health Center by calling: 207-796-5503

The following agencies are also excellent community resources:

Maine 2-1-1

211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services. 211 Maine is based in Maine and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Dial **211** or **1-866-811-5695** (If calling from Maine; TTY and Video Relay accessible)
- Or dial 1-877-463-6207 (If calling from out-of-state)
- Text your zip code to 898-211
- Email info@211maine.org

Maine Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Membership is open to anyone interested in Maine Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. AA Maine meetings are based on an effective, self-supporting approach to problematic drinking.

Find a meeting in Maine: <https://alcoholicsanonymous.com/aa-meetings/maine/>

Time to Ask Program Resources

<https://lunderdineen.org/time-to-ask-unhealthy-alcohol-use/>

Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine

<https://thealliancemaine.org/do-you-need-help/>

Sipping Point: Your Guide to Drinking Responsibly

<https://preventionforme.org/the-sipping-point/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Hours: Available 24 hours. Languages: English, Spanish.

Learn more: 800-273-8255

Rethinking Drinking

<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/>

 LUNDER · DINEEN
Health Education Alliance of Maine
In collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital



TIME TO ASK

Education that transforms
conversations about alcohol use