

Health Unit Encourages You to Rethink Your Drinking

For the first time ever, Canada has one national set of low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines. These guidelines, intended for Canadians of legal drinking age who choose to drink alcohol, aim to provide consistent information across the country to help Canadians moderate their alcohol consumption and make informed choices. The new guidelines outline standard drink sizes, limits for men and women, discuss when the limit is zero, and provide healthy alternatives and tips to decrease health risks.

When it comes to alcohol, drinking is a personal choice, and the majority of people drink responsibly. We're not asking you to stop drinking ... instead we want you to Rethink Your Drinking, and gradually reduce the amount of alcohol you consume as part of a healthy lifestyle. If you choose to drink, these guidelines can help you decide when, where, why and how.

We all have reasons to celebrate. Celebrations and special events are times when the guidelines can help you make decisions about drinking alcohol – Rethinking your Drinking! Knowing your limits and standard drink sizes, can help you make the right decisions for you. You can reduce your risk of harm or injury, by limiting alcoholic drinks to no more than 3 drinks for women or 4 drinks for men on special occasions. If you host a party and alcohol is served, offer your guests food and non-alcoholic drinks. Making sure everyone has a safe ride home is a really important part of having a safe, enjoyable celebration.

During the holidays, you can choose many delicious alternative drinks to alcoholic beverages. Check out the mocktail recipes on our website for just a few ideas that taste great and are good for you!

There are lots of safe tips to consider when drinking alcohol whether you are the host or the guest.

- **Have limits for yourself and stick to them.**
- **Try a 'spacer' – for every drink with alcohol have an alcohol free drink like water or juice. Drink slowly and have no more than 2 alcoholic drinks in any 3 hours.**
- **Avoid drinking games that require 'chugging'. Enjoy many mocktail recipes you can find on our website at www.healthunit.org.**
- **Eating before and while you are drinking is important. You can also talk to your health care provider to find out more about how alcohol affects your health.**

For more information on how to **Rethink your Drinking**, please visit our website: www.healthunit.org or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853. Like our facebook page for important public health updates. Follow @areyousafe for information on how alcohol affects your sexual health.

1. Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (2007); Women and Alcohol: Referenced from http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/a_z_mental_health_and_addiction_information/alcohol/women_and_alcohol/Pages/women_and_alcohol.aspx
2. Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. (2011). Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines. Referenced from: <http://www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca/guidelines.php>
3. Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2011). Alcohol and Caffeine use among Youth and Young Adults. Referenced from: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-Alcohol-and-Caffeine-Policy-Brief-2012-en.pdf>

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