

## Facts about alcohol

- Alcohol is a drug.
- Alcohol effects are immediate.
- Alcohol is a depressant.
- Alcohol affects each person differently.
- Alcohol affects the choices you make.

### 1 standard drink



**5 oz/142 ml of wine  
(12% alcohol)**



**1.5 oz/43 ml of spirits  
(40% alcohol)**



**12 oz/341 ml of beer or coolers  
(5% alcohol)**

## Weave a healthy lifestyle

- Do something you love. Follow your passion.
- Set goals for yourself.
- Plan ahead for a safe night out.
- Eat well following Canada's Food Guide.
- Physical activity for at least 150 minutes weekly.
- Avoid tobacco smoke.
- Women: Limit alcohol use to 2 or fewer drinks per day.
- Men: Limit alcohol use to 3 or fewer drinks per day.
- See your health practitioner regularly.
- Take time to relax each day.

This pamphlet has been created by  
Public Health Sudbury & Districts  
in partnership with the  
Za-geh-do-win Information Clearinghouse.



**Public Health  
Santé publique**  
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

R: 2020-06

# Alcohol and your health

Like a spider web, everything  
in life is connected.  
Alcohol can catch you  
in its web.

# When you use alcohol, you are at risk for:

## Physical effects

### Cancer

Risk for cancers of the mouth, stomach, and breast have been linked to alcohol use.

### Liver damage

Long-term alcohol use can cause cirrhosis and other liver conditions.

### Impaired immune system

Alcohol reduces your ability to fight infections and this makes you more susceptible to colds.

### Pancreatitis

Severe stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, jaundice (skin turns yellow) may be signs of pancreatitis. Diabetes can also develop from the use of alcohol.

### Gout

A painful swelling of the joints in hands, wrists, feet and ankles that may flare up with alcohol use.

### Impaired thought process

Memory loss, inability to think properly, mood changes, and hallucinations are associated with alcohol use.

### Stroke

Alcohol use increases your risk for high blood pressure and stroke.

### Sexual dysfunction

Alcohol use may cause a loss of sexual desire, impotence, and possible infertility.

## Social effects

### Injury

Using alcohol will increase your chances of injury. Alcohol can affect judgement, delay reaction time, impair attention span, and reduce coordination and the ability to problem solve.

### Drinking and driving

People who drink and drive put themselves and others at risk. If caught drinking and driving, penalties include: immediate licence suspension, losing your licence, paying a fine, licence reinstatement fee, an increase in insurance rates, required to attend an education program or have to install an ignition interlock device (in all vehicles you drive) at your own expense.

### Violence

Alcohol is a contributing factor in many acts of domestic abuse, child abuse (including incest), assaults, robberies, murders, and suicides. Alcohol impairs judgement so a sexual partner must be sober to consent to having sex. Having sex with a partner who is not sober can be considered sexual assault.

### Unplanned sex

If you drink, your decision-making abilities and judgement are impaired. When someone is impaired, they may take part in risky behaviours like unprotected sex. This behaviour increases their risk for unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS).

### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a term used to describe the harm caused to people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. FASD is a lifelong disorder with effects that include physical, mental, behavioural and learning disabilities. These can vary from mild to severe. There is no safe time, no safe amount and no safe kind of alcohol use during pregnancy.

### Binge drinking

Binge drinking refers to drinking four or more drinks for women, and five or more drinks for men, on one occasion, at least once a month in the past year. One of the main causes of binge drinking is peer pressure. Binge drinking may lead to alcohol poisoning, brain damage and even death.

### Personal issues

Chronic alcohol use can lead to several personal issues. Some issues can impact your work, your relationships as well as your schooling. Impairment from alcohol is a major cause of unemployment, absenteeism, and can cause a significant number of workplace incidents. Using alcohol can lead to poor academic performance.