

How much is too much?

Whether or not you choose to drink is up to you. And only you can decide how much is too much. Here are some questions to help you think about alcohol's impact in your life.

- Do you drink to escape your problems or stress in your life?
- Do you drink to feel better?
- Do you drink to feel more confident?
- Is drinking the main reason for getting together with friends?
- Have you ever missed work or skipped class?
- Do you ever have trouble remembering what happened?
- Have you ever felt embarrassed or guilty afterwards?
- Have you ever hurt yourself or someone else?
- Have you ever had unplanned, unprotected or unwanted sex?
- Do you usually throw up or have a hangover?
- Do you ever drive?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, it may be time to take a look at your drinking and make some changes.

If you need emergency help, please visit your local emergency department or call 911, or contact a nurse at Telehealth Ontario by dialing 1-866-797-0000.

For non emergency information and treatment:

Drug & Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART).....www.dart.ca
Phone (24 hour): 1-800-565-8603

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).....www.camh.net
CAMH Emergency Department located at 250 College St.
Phone (24 hour): 416-535-8501 ext. 6885

Distress Line.....www.torontodistresscentre.com
Phone (24 hour): 416-408-HELP (4357)

Assaulted Women's Helpline.....www.awhl.org/services.htm

All crisis line phone numbers below are 24 hour.

*SAFE (*7233) on Bell, Rogers, Telus or Fido cell phones

GTA: 416-863-0511

GTA TTY: 416-364-8762

Toll-Free: 1-866-863-0511

Toll-Free TTY: 1-866-863-7868

Toronto Health Connection.....www.toronto.ca/health

Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Phone: 416-338-7600 Translation services available

TTY: 416-392-0658

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PH0902.GB051

**EXTREME
DRINKING
A DANGEROUS
WAY TO PARTY**

**THE AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL IT TAKES FOR YOU TO PASS OUT IS
DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THE AMOUNT IT TAKES TO KILL YOU**

416.338.7600
toronto.ca/health

TORONTO
Public Health

EXTREME DRINKING – OVER THE EDGE

Ever notice how, sometimes, a few beers have a different effect than other times? That's because there are a number of factors – other than the amount you drink – that influence how you react to alcohol, including how, when, where and why you drink.

Knowing the facts will help you stay in control. As a first step, it's smart to learn what drinking excessively means, what the risks are and what is meant by "one standard drink" of alcohol.

Extreme drinking means drinking more than your body can handle, which can put you at risk of passing out, memory loss, impaired judgment, blackouts, vomiting, injury, and – worst of all – alcohol overdose.

Alcohol overdose is serious. It occurs when a person drinks too much, especially if it is consumed quickly. Because alcohol is a depressant, the brain reacts by slowing down many critical functions, including blood pressure, heart rate and breathing. In this situation, the brain tries to take care of us and sends a signal to the stomach to vomit and eliminate any unabsorbed alcohol. Drink enough and your heart can be slowed to the point of stopping.

Alcohol's impact can be unpredictable

Alcohol's effect on you and your risk for problems depends on the interaction of three important factors:

- 1 The amount** The number of standard drinks consumed and the speed at which you drink.
- 2 The person** Body weight, gender, health, energy level, empty or full stomach, use of other drugs and your mood at the time.
- 3 The environment** Where drinking happens, who you are drinking with and your other responsibilities, like children or work.

A standard drink – it may be less than you think



Your liver doesn't care what you drink. It can only process about one standard drink per hour. Each of these drinks contains the same amount and the same kind of alcohol, 13.6 grams of ethanol (pure alcohol).

1 standard drink = 341 ml/12-oz can or bottle of **beer** (5% alcohol)
142 ml/5-oz glass of **wine** (13% alcohol)
43 ml/1.5-oz shot of **hard liquor** (40% alcohol)

Higher alcohol beers and coolers have more alcohol than one standard drink.

Safer Drinking Is Possible

Before drinking:

- Know the size of a standard drink.
- Have a plan.
 - Set the maximum number of drinks you're going to have before you start.
 - Bring only the amount of money you plan to spend.
 - Decide how you are getting to and from the bar or party, and leave the car keys behind.
 - Put enough cash aside for the ride home.
 - Choose to drink with friends who are onside with your plan.

While drinking:

- Drink slowly.
- Resist the pressure to "chug" drinks or play "drinking games".
 - When you drink faster than the body can handle, you run the risk of having alcohol overdose, which is a sure way to end up in the emergency room.
- Stop drinking alcohol when you've reached your set limit, and drink water, juice or pop.
- Alternate alcohol with non-alcoholic drinks.
- Don't drink on an empty stomach.