



Tips for healthy aging and alcohol use:

- Avoid drinking alcohol on an empty stomach.
- Sip your drink slowly.
- Avoid drinking alcohol when you are angry, upset or depressed.
- Avoid driving if drinking alcohol.
- Avoid drinking alcohol when taking medications.



Resources

VT Helplink
802-565-LINK
vthelplink.org



Medical emergencies: Dial 9-1-1

Vermont Area Agencies on Aging
Senior Help: (800) 642-5119

Support and Services at Home (SASH)
(802) 863-2224

VNAs of Vermont
(855) 484-3862

Medication disposal
Dial 2-1-1 to find locations in your community
For more info, locations, and free mail-back envelopes: healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart

Aging & Alcohol: What you should know



Department of Health
Division of Substance Use Programs
108 Cherry St. • Burlington, VT 05402
(800) 464-4343 • (802) 651-1550
healthvermont.gov

Department of Disabilities,
Aging & Independent Living
HC2 So., 280 State Dr. • Waterbury, VT 05671
(802) 241-0294
dail.vermont.gov

How does alcohol affect you as you age?

Decreased tolerance

Aging lowers the body's tolerance for alcohol. Older adults generally become intoxicated and impaired with fewer drinks. This puts older adults at higher risks for falls and other injuries and health problems.

Increased health problems

Certain health problems are common in older adults. Drinking more than the recommended guidelines can make these problems worse, including:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Liver problems
- Osteoporosis
- Memory problems
- Heart disease

Medication interactions

Many prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and herbal remedies can be harmful or even deadly when mixed with alcohol, including:

- Aspirin and acetaminophen
- Heart medications
- Sleeping pills
- Cold and allergy medicine
- Pain medication
- Anxiety or depression medication



Medicine and alcohol misuse can happen unintentionally

Here are some signals that may indicate an alcohol or medication interaction problem:

- Memory trouble after having a drink or taking medicine
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Loss of coordination (walking unsteadily, frequent falls)
- Irritability, sadness, depression
- Lack of interest in usual activities

For more information, contact any of the resources on the back of this brochure.

No more than one drink a day.

For healthy adults age 65 and over, drinking more than one drink a day puts you at risk of serious health problems.

If you have a health problem or take certain medications, you should drink even less or not at all.

What is considered one drink?



12 fl. oz. of regular beer — about **5% alcohol**



8–9 fl. oz. of craft beer (shown in a 12 oz. glass) — about **7% alcohol**



5 fl. oz. of table wine — about **12% alcohol**



1.5 fl. oz. shot of 80-proof distilled spirits (gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey, etc.) — **40% alcohol**

Although the “standard” drink amounts are helpful for following health guidelines, they may not reflect customary serving sizes.

In addition, while the alcohol concentrations listed are “typical,” alcohol content varies within each type of beverage (e.g. beer, wine, distilled spirits).