

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Over 100 million American adults drink alcoholic beverages responsibly. For these adults, moderate consumption of beer, wine or distilled spirits may be an acceptable lifestyle choice. Research has shown that moderate drinking (1-2 drinks per day for men and 1 drink per day for women) may reduce risk of heart disease and lower your risk of stroke. Some studies have also noted that even one drink per day may increase a women's risk for breast cancer, so be aware of your family history when deciding whether or not alcohol may have some health benefits for you.



Alcohol is a contributing factor in:

- 60% of fatal burns, drowning and homicides
- 50% of severe trauma and sexual assaults
- 40% of fatal car accidents
- 40% of suicides and fatal falls

Excessive alcohol intake can lead to high blood pressure, liver or heart disease, and certain types of cancers. Long term effects of heavy drinking may include loss of appetite, digestive problems, vitamin deficiencies, obesity, sexual dysfunction, memory loss and psychological disorders.

You should abstain from drinking alcohol if you:

- Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
- Have a pre-existing medical condition such as a gastric ulcer or liver disease
- Have a personal family history of alcoholism
- Are taking any medications that interact with alcohol (this may apply to both over the counter and prescription meds – check labels)
- Are engaging in activities that require attention, skill or coordination like driving or operating machinery or power tools
- Are under the legal drinking age

Adults who choose to drink alcohol should do so responsibly at all times. If you would like to find out what type of drinker you are and whether you are at risk for developing a drinking problem, go to: www.RethinkingDrinking.niaaa.nih.gov. This free, interactive website provides helpful tips and resources for drinkers to learn more about their alcohol consumption patterns. Please talk with your personal doctor or find out if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help you or a family member with treatment options.

Source: *National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*