

# Alcohol Use and Liver Disease

- Excessive alcohol use is the third leading lifestyle-related cause of death for the nation.
- Alcohol affects all body systems!
- Learn the risks and health effects of alcohol consumption.

## Green Flags – All Clear

## What this means ...



### If you:

Do not drink or if you do, drink in moderation.

- You are taking steps in taking care of your health

**Keep up the good work!**

## Yellow Flags – Caution

## What this means ...



### If you have:

- Drink heavily and are frequently intoxicated.
- Risky behaviors e.g. driving after drinking
- Loss of appetite
- Regularly lose control over your alcohol intake, drink to cope with difficulties, or to avoid feeling bad.
- A need to drink to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms

- You are at increased risk for accidents and injuries
- You are at increased risk for health complications
- You may benefit from counseling
- You may benefit from alcohol treatment

**Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Instructions:**

**If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.**

## Red Flags – Stop and Think

## What this means ...



### If you:

- Black out (have little or no memory of events before passing out)
- Shake or have tremors in your hands and legs, or have a seizure
- Have hallucinations
- Have nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and dehydration.
- Vomit blood
- Have confusion, agitation, sweating, rapid heart rate and high blood pressure indicating delirium tremens (“DTs”)
- Have loss of consciousness or fainting
- Feel suicidal

You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

**If possible, notify your health care provider’s office.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1**

**If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 911. Emergency!**

# Alcohol Fast Facts

- Alcoholism, also known as “alcohol dependence” is a disease that includes alcohol craving and continued drinking despite repeated alcohol-related problems, such as losing a job or getting into trouble with the law. Approximately 80,000 deaths are attributed to excessive alcohol use each year in the United States.
- **Alcohol affects all body systems.** It acts as a depressant and slows reaction time that leads to impaired judgment and decreased coordination. High intake of alcohol can cause mood swings, behavior changes, and problems with your ability to walk. Other side effects include dilation of blood vessels and increased stomach acid.
- Moderate drinking is defined as up to four alcoholic drinks for men and three for women in any single day.
- Heavy drinkers suffer a variety of alcohol-related problems including damage to the brain, (including strokes), stomach, heart disease (high blood pressure, an enlarged heart and/or irregular heartbeat and heart attacks), elevated cholesterol levels, as well as diseases of the liver and pancreas. They are also ten times more likely to get cancer than those who drink moderately or not at all. Cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, and breast are increased.
- Your liver can only metabolize about one drink per hour, so drinking more than that causes intoxication and impairment.
- Binge drinking is generally defined as the consumption of 5 or more drinks on 1 occasion.
- Each year, thousands of people choke on their own vomit while intoxicated.
- Alcohol poisoning, a medical emergency results from high blood alcohol levels that suppress the central nervous system and can cause loss of consciousness, low blood pressure and body temperature, coma, respiratory depression, or death.

## What can you do?

- Talk openly to your health care provider. There is help out there for you, if you are interested.
- Avoid mixing alcohol and over the counter or prescription medicines
- Avoid alcohol if you have had a previous hemorrhagic stroke, have heart failure, or if you have been told you have weak heart or an enlarged heart
- Avoid alcohol if you have liver or pancreatic disease
- Contact the addiction treatment helpline:

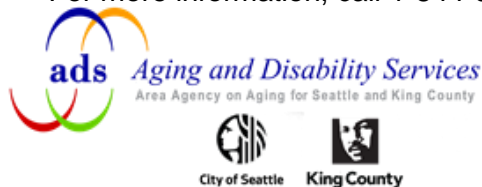
**1-800-610-HOPE (4673)**

Washington Recovery Help Line  
24-Hour Help for Substance Abuse, Problem Gambling & Mental Health  
866-789-1511  
TTY 206-461-3219

## Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org)



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