

# Alcohol

## What is Alcohol?

The “Alcohol” in a drink is Ethyl alcohol, or ethanol. It is a depressant (slows down your body) and is absorbed through your stomach and small intestine into your blood stream, which causes intoxication or makes you feel “drunk.”

## What does alcohol do to me?

Brain: Alcohol slows down your brain, which makes it hard to think clearly, control your body, and remember things. It can eventually cause long-term irreversible brain damage.

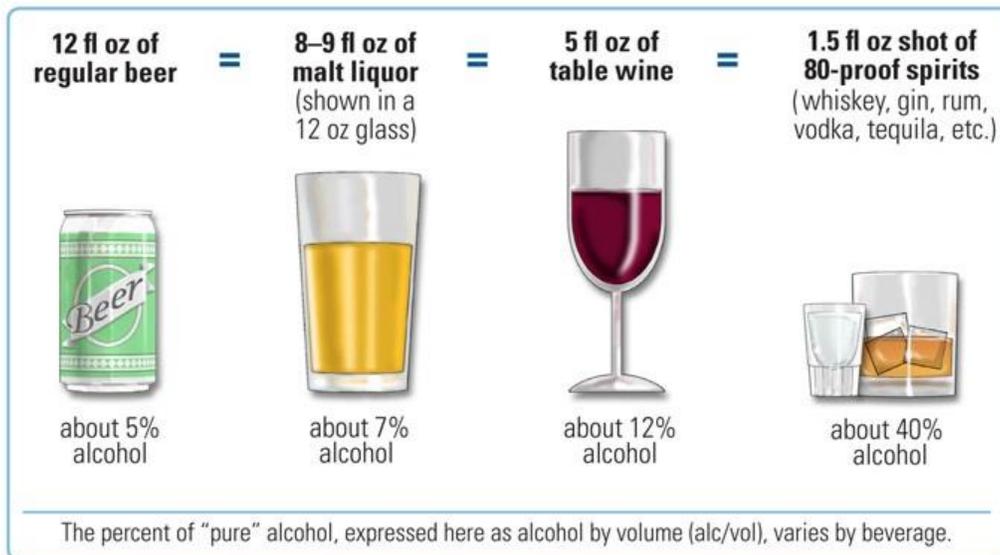
Heart: Alcohol can slow down your heart, make it skip beats, or even cause heart failure.

Liver: Alcohol damages your liver and leaves scars, which makes it hard for it to do its job.

Emotional: Alcohol can make you sad or angry.

Behavior: Alcohol limits your freedom to make decisions, which may cause you to act in ways you normally wouldn't.

## How much is too much?



Men should not drink more than 5 drinks a day or 15 drinks in a week. It is also suggested that you have at least 3 days a week when you don't drink.

Women should not drink more than 4 drinks in a day or 8 drinks a week. It is also suggested that you have at least 3 days a week when you don't drink.

Women who are pregnant should never drink.

Reduce your risk of harm by learning about alcohol, how it affects you, and how to use safely.  
You're worth it!

## How can I drink more safely?

- Stick to the above limits.
- Eat before or while you drink.
- Have a glass of water for every drink you have.
- Avoid games or drinks that cause you to drink fast. For example, don't play drinking games or do shots.
- Do not take valuable items with you when you drink. Leave them at home or in a safe place.
- Drink at places you know with people who you feel safe with.
- Have a safe place to go after you drink. Do not drive there or ride with someone who was drinking.
- Follow the law when you have been drinking and be polite to any police.
- Don't be afraid to say "no."

## How can I get help if I am thinking of making a change?

### Heartland Health Centers

Heartland staff can talk to you about how much you drink and let you know if it seems healthy. If you're drinking too much, we can talk about how to get help or may be able to provide help ourselves.

### Smart Recovery

They offer groups and other services to help you with your drinking. It is not a 12-step model like AA, but offers the same type of group support.

### Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Is a well-known organization that offers 12-step groups and sponsors.

**Ask us for a list of group times and locations!**

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