



Guide to Safer Alcohol Use

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:
healthyu@umanitoba.ca



Alcohol and University

While alcohol is part of some student's university experience, it isn't part of everyone's.

39% of students choose not to drink or have not consumed alcohol within the past 30 days. If you choose not to drink, you are not alone!

According to a recent survey (NCHA, 2019) students were under the impression their peers are drinking more than they actually are.

96% Perceived use → 61% Actual use

The misconception about increased alcohol use amongst university students is important to address as it can contribute to perceived peer pressure to consume when in fact, just under half of the students reported to not drinking or drinking once.



*Data from spring 2019 NCHA survey

What counts as one drink?



Wine (12% alcohol)

142 mL or 5 oz.



Distilled alcohol (40% alcohol)
(rye, vodka, rum, gin, etc.)

43 mL or 1.5 oz.



Beer (5% alcohol)

341 mL or 12 oz.



Cider/Cooler (5% alcohol)

341 mL or 12 oz.

What is the recommended amount to consume?

The recommended amounts of alcohol to consume has changed as of 2023 (last reviewed 2011), and as science evolves, it has been proven that the more amounts of drinks one consumes, the higher the risks of alcohol-related consequences such as accidents or disease.

Even small quantities of alcohol can be harmful and may have consequences for **everyone**, no matter the gender, age, or alcohol tolerance.

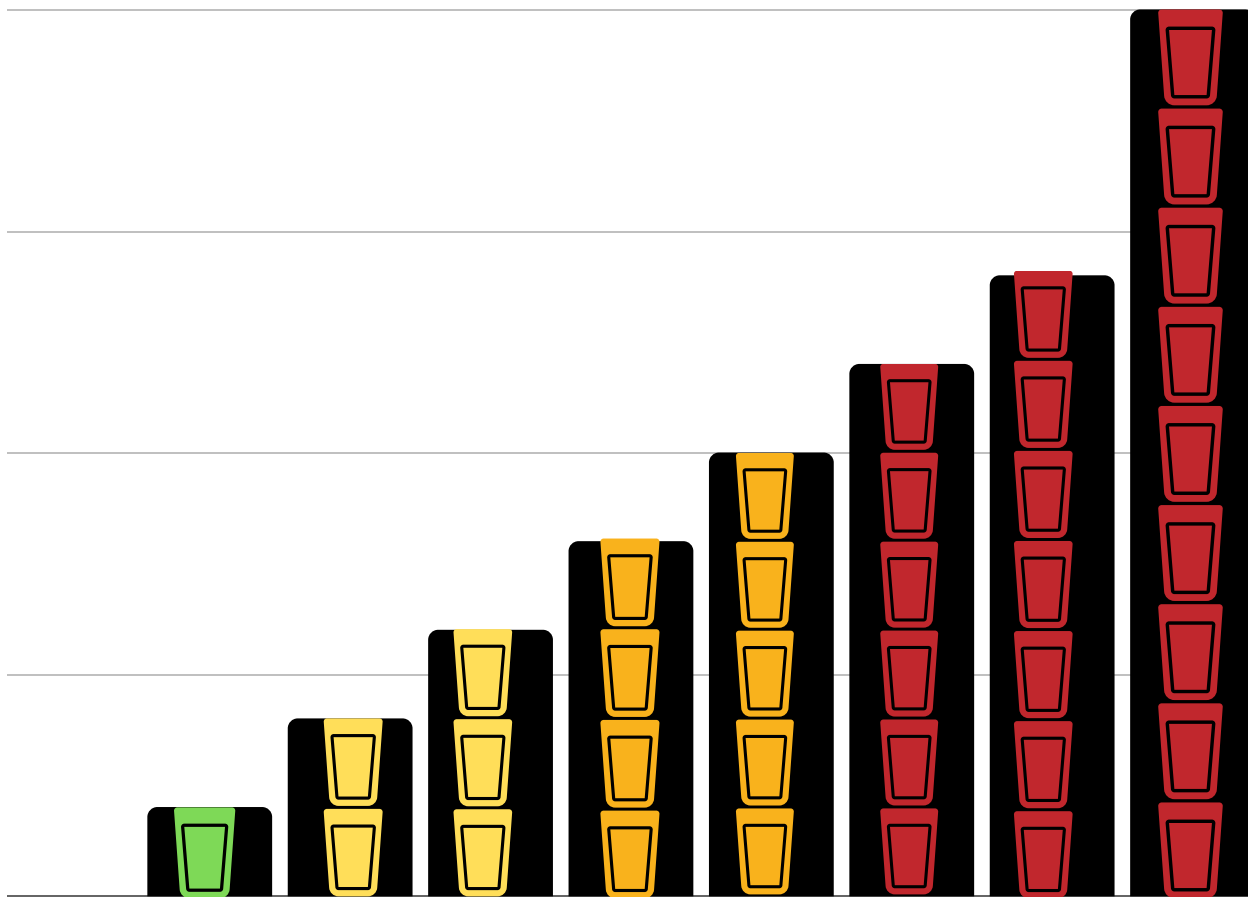
As of 2023, the new low risk guidelines recommends a **maximum of 1 to 2 drinks per week.**



Screening Tool

The risk of alcohol-caused consequences increased with the number of drinks you have per WEEK.

For more information on the new guidelines or to explore supporting research, visit [The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction](#)



No Risk

Low Risk

Moderate Risk

Increasingly High Risk

2 drinks of less would help you avoid most of the consequences from alcohol.

3 to 6 drinks per week increases the risk of developing certain cancers and illnesses.

7 drinks or more increases the risk of developing heart disease or stroke. Each additional drink increases the risk of other health problems and injuries.

Binge Drinking

Binge drinking has been defined as consuming 5 or more drinks for men or four or more drinks for women in one sitting.

Binge drinking can put you at an increased risk for:

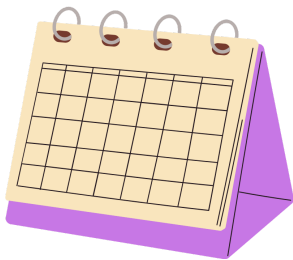
- Unintentional injury such as motor vehicle collisions, falls, or burns
- Chronic diseases such as heart disease or high blood pressure
- Development of alcohol dependence
- Increased violence
- Becoming a victim of sexual violence
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Academic challenges (missing class or falling behind in schoolwork)
- Memory, concentration, and learning difficulties
- Changes in mood
- Doing something you later regret
- Forgetting where you are or what you did



Reduction Strategies – Going out?

Alcohol has no proven health benefits. Although often used in social settings, any reduction of its consumption can be helpful! How you choose to use is up to you.

Here are some tips to reduce your use and/or risk while using, should you feel this is helpful to you:



Keep track of how much you drink per week. It's never too late to reflect on old habits or set new goals. Try using the notes app in your phone.

Stick to your limits and set personal boundaries on your consumption. You should never feel coerced to drink. If you feel pressured by friends or others to drink, it is okay to reflect on that relationship. Consider having a conversation about this.



Try choosing drinks with less alcohol % or switch up to a new mocktail! For every alcoholic drink, alternate with one nonalcoholic. Remember, keep drinking water.

Consider eating before and during periods of drinking to help avoid risk of rapid intoxication.



OR Consider not to drink alcohol.

If alcohol is involved in your plans, here are some tips to stay as safe as possible.

- ▶ Plan your ride home before going anywhere. Consider using a designated driver (DD), which could be:



- A friend or family member
- A taxi or an Uber driver
- Take turns being DD with your friends so that everyone has a safe ride home
- Avoid getting into a car with someone who has been drinking
- If you cannot arrange a DD, choose not to drink

If you're offered a drink you didn't see poured, decline. If someone wants to buy you a drink, go up to the bar with them and take the drink directly from the bartender.

- ▶ Keep your drink with you at all times. Never leave a drink unattended.
- ▶ Some medications interact dangerously with alcohol - talk to your Pharmacist before drinking.
- ▶ If you're at a bar, note where the security guards are in case you need them later.
- ▶ Pace drinks to one or fewer an hour.
- ▶ Stay with the same group of friends the entire time drinking.
- ▶ Stick with only one kind of alcohol while drinking.

Remember, you are the only one who gets to choose how you use. Setting up boundaries or strategies like the ones above are normal and acceptable!

Alcohol poisoning

While it may seem like a normal part of partying, alcohol poisoning can be very dangerous. If you or a friend starts feeling unwell, it's time to stop drinking alcohol - more drinks may distract you for the mean time but it'll just make things worse. Get this person somewhere safe - either home or to medical care if needed.

Encourage the person to drink as much water as they can. If they can eat, foods like bread are great because they soak up the alcohol in your stomach (so it won't be absorbed as quickly).

If the person passes out, make sure you roll them onto their side and stay with them. Don't try to feed them anything if they aren't awake.

When to call 911:

- If the person's breathing is irregular or they aren't breathing at all
- If they are passed out and still vomiting
- If you can't find a pulse
- If they're turning blue
- If they don't respond when you pinch them
- If you're concerned that no one is sober enough to help them.

The next day, the person will need to drink lots of water as well as eat some foods that contain sugar (your liver is too busy dealing with the alcohol to maintain your sugar levels for you).

Give your body a break from alcohol for a while - drinking more to cure a hangover is a myth and can add to the damage.

Exploring Relationships with Alcohol

If you choose to drink, monitoring and reflecting upon your alcohol use can be helpful in acknowledging use, risks, and protective strategies.

Personal reflection questions you can ask yourself to explore your relationship with alcohol include (but are not limited to):

- Why do I drink (is it to feel more social, is it fun, is it to cope with uncomfortable feelings)?
- How often am I drinking, do I notice any patterns?
- How much do I drink (does this increase or decrease with certain feelings or in certain environments)?
- Who do I drink with (a certain group of friends, a family member, alone)?
- How do I feel before I drink, while I am drinking, and after I drink?
- What are the perceived benefits of my drinking?
- What are consequences that follow my drinking (consider impacts on physical, social, and emotional health, academics or career, relationships)
- Has anyone ever expressed concern to me about my drinking before?
- What harm reduction strategies do I put in place before I drink? Which strategies could I add?
- Do I drink because I enjoy it, or do I feel pressured?
- What do I prioritize over drinking? What do I prioritize drinking over?

The decision to drink, how much to drink, or to not drink, is yours. If you do choose to drink, regularly checking in with yourself allows you to stay aware and have the information you need to make choices best for you.

If you would like assistance in exploring your relationship with alcohol, to discuss further harm reduction or abstinence strategies, or to find support to manage harms or discomfort stemming from someone else's drinking, have a look at the resources below.

UM Resources

Alcohol

Student Counselling Centre (SCC)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and group and has an Addictions Foundation of Manitoba counsellor on site, throughout the week.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

University Health Services (UHS)

UHS provides health care services for UM students.

ACW-Lot temporary trailer (behind the Isbister building)

204-474-8411

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness/university-health-service>

Console

Console is a mental health service available to UM students who have insurance through the university. Console offers 24-hour crisis support, daily journal, wellness assessment quizzes, mental health literacy training, and self-guided therapy. Console also connects students with mental health professional support VIA telephone.

https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_Console_Console

Healthy U

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

Indigenous Student Centre (ISC)

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development. They also provide opportunities for students, staff and the wider community to learn about First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

isc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

Off Campus Resources

Alcohol

Winnipeg, MB

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM)

AFM provides resources, courses, and services for people with substance use issues.

Manitoba Addictions Helpline: 1-855-662-6605

<https://afm.mb.ca/>

Manitoba Addictions Helpline

Should you be experiencing challenges with alcohol use, you can phone the MB Addictions Helpline and be connected with a counsellor.

Drop In: River Point Centre, 146 Magnus Ave

General Line: 1-855-662-6605

<http://mbaddictionhelp.ca/>

Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine (RAAM)

The RAAM clinic can provide education, counselling, medication or other supports for those looking to change their substance use. The RAAM clinic is embedded in 2 locations in Winnipeg.

1. River Point Centre 204-644-6209

2. Crisis Response Centre 204 792 7159

<https://afm.mb.ca/programs-and-services/raam/>

Alcoholics Anonymous

Join a group of people who share common experiences and challenges with alcohol use.

<https://aamanitoba.org/meetings>

Al-Anon Group

A group for people to attend who are worried or effected by a loved one's drinking patterns.

<https://al-anon.org>

Online

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

Access resources about substance use.

<https://www.ccsa.ca/resources-alcohol>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets.htm>

Student Mental Health Support Network

Explore this interactive learning module on Alcohol and Substance Use.

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/kS5HH31pjDuJ1dC2CDdiiEiPqFqMK2bw#/>