



WOMEN AND ALCOHOL

Several times a year, it seems, headlines appear announcing the health benefits of alcohol. Alcohol can, for particular people, under particular circumstances, promote longevity, help prevent heart disease, reduce the risk of dementia, etc. However, alcohol also causes a number of health problems, especially for women.



Why especially us? Women are more sensitive to alcohol than men. We have a higher percentage of body fat, and a lower percentage of water. Water helps to dilute alcohol in the body, where fat retains alcohol; as a result, when we drink our bodies are exposed to higher concentrations of alcohol for longer than men's are. Men also produce more of the enzyme that breaks up alcohol in the stomach, so less alcohol actually gets absorbed into their systems. A woman having one drink is affected the same as a man of similar bodyweight and build having two drinks.

The benefits of drinking are outweighed by the risks. As little as half a drink per day is an established risk for breast cancer. Women become dependent on alcohol more quickly than men, and by drinking less alcohol than men. We also suffer the consequences of drinking, like brain damage, several cancers, liver disease, etc. more quickly. Very little alcohol can impair our driving skills, and very little more alcohol can put us over the legal limit. When we drink heavily we are more vulnerable to sexual assault. It takes less alcohol to put us at greater risk of accidental injuries. When we are pregnant, could be pregnant or are breastfeeding some of any alcohol we drink gets passed on to the fetus or baby, affecting its health and development. There is no known safe number of drinks to have while pregnant.

A person's body, and health, is affected by alcohol whether or not they have gotten drunk. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's guidelines for alcohol limit women to 1 or 2 drinks per day (even a day on the beach, at a barbeque, party, or sports tournament) and 9 or fewer drinks per week. The CAMH limits men to 1 or 2 drinks per day and no more than 14 per week.

According to Health Canada more than 4 drinks on one occasion or more than 14 drinks in a week is a risk to health and safety for anyone.

1 Standard Drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol:

5oz / 152mL of wine (12% alcohol) OR 1.5oz / 43mL of spirits (40% alcohol) OR 12oz / 341mL regular strength beer (5% alcohol)

Tips:

- ♀ If you don't drink, don't start drinking because it is supposed to be good for your health. Instead you could try to eat healthier foods, get more exercise or quit smoking.
- ♀ Avoid getting drunk.
- ♀ Wait at least an hour between drinks.
- ♀ Eat something. Drink water, pop, or juice.
- ♀ Don't drink every day. There should be at least one day per week when you don't drink at all.
- ♀ Know what a standard drink is, and keep track of how much you drink per day and per week.
- ♀ Never ride with a driver who has been drinking.
- ♀ Encourage guests to follow these guidelines.
- ♀ Talk to your kids about alcohol.

Don't drink at all if:

- ♀ You have health problems like liver disease or mental health concerns.
- ♀ You are taking sedatives, painkillers, sleeping pills, or other drugs that can interact with alcohol.
- ♀ You are pregnant, trying to conceive, or if you are breastfeeding.
- ♀ You will be driving anything: car, truck, boat, plane, snowmobile, go-cart, anything.
- ♀ You will be playing sports or doing a challenging physical activity.
- ♀ You are responsible for the safety of other people.
- ♀ You are told not to drink for medical or legal reasons.
- ♀ You have a family history of alcohol problems.
- ♀ You already have a high risk of developing certain health problems, like cancer.

This information and advice came from the following sources:

Action on Women's Addictions – Research and Education Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, etc., Harvard Women's Health Watch, International Centre for Alcohol Policies, US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health

THE JOY DIET: TEN PRACTICES FOR A HAPPIER LIFE By Martha Beck, Random House, 2003

1. **Nothing** – Do nothing for at least 15 minutes everyday.
2. **Truth** – Create and absorb at least one moment of truth each day.
3. **Desire** – Each day identify, articulate and explore one of your heart's desires.
4. **Creativity** – Everyday conceptualize and write down at least one new, concrete idea that will help you obtain something that your heart desires.
5. **Risk** – Everyday do at least one thing outside of your comfort zone that contributes to the fulfillment of your desires.



6. **Treats** – Everyday, give yourself at least 3 treats. No exceptions, no excuses.
7. **Play** – Once a day, take time to remember your true life's work... then commit to playing the game you're in wholeheartedly.
8. **Laughter** – Look for ways to laugh at least 30 times each day.
9. **Connection** – Everyday, use skills 1 to 5 in your interaction with someone who is important to you.
10. **Feasting** – Have 3 square feasts a day... food or something else yummy.



PRENATAL FAIR

May 7, September 24, 2007

6:45 to 9:00 pm Holiday Inn, Peterborough.

Free. Hosted by the Peterborough County City Health Unit.

Interactive displays and seminars by health professionals and community partners, the Empathy Belly for Dads-to-be, information packages, refreshments, demonstrations and door prizes.

Call 743-1000 for more information.



WELL WOMEN PROGRAMS ON THE ROAD

Coping Better with Stress: The Juggling Act

Thursday afternoons, April 26 and May 3

1:00 to 3:00

Women's Resources, Lindsay

Call 705-878-4285 to register

From Anger that Hurts to Boundaries that Heal

Thursday afternoons, May 10, 17, 24, 31

1:00 to 3:00

Women's Resources, Lindsay

Call 705- 878-4285 to register

Time for Me

Ontario Early Years Centre, Wilberforce

Thursday, May 17

10:00 to 11:30

Call 705-457-2989

Support group? Church group? Knitting club? Sports team? Youth group? Book club? Women's group? If you have a group that you would like us to present to, give us a call at 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111.



NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR?

Although you may not have a family doctor there are clinics where anyone can get medical care:

Peterborough Day Clinic: 705-740-6880

Lakefield and Area Clinic: 705-652-6355

Sexual Health Clinic: 705-748-2021

Cobourg After Hours Clinic: 905-373-8333

Port Hope Walk-In Clinic: 905-885-0611

Haliburton Medical Centre: 705-457-1212

Lindsay Community Walk-In Clinic: No phone

65 Angeline St. N.

Monday to Friday 7 to 9 p.m.

Wednesday 1 to 4

Saturday and Sunday 10 to 12 noon

Ross Memorial Hospital Walk-In: No phone

Monday to Friday 6-9 p.m.

Weekends and Holidays 11 to 2 p.m.

If you live in Peterborough County, you can also get on the waiting list to be taken on as a patient by a Family Health Team by calling 740-8020. Of course, if you cannot get care at one of these clinics, or have a health emergency at any time, go to the emergency department of your local hospital.



NEW ADDITIONS TO THE WHCC LIBRARY

Family and Friends' Guide to Domestic Violence; How to Listen, Talk and Take Action When Someone You Care About is Being Abused by Elaine Weiss

Practical answers to the complicated questions that come up when you suspect someone is being abused. Includes warning signs, how to bring the subject up and talk about it, safety planning, etc.

In Your Face; The Culture of Beauty and You by Shari Graydon
Puts cultural images of beauty and its importance into perspective for teenagers. "This is a no-nonsense guide to thinking critically about beauty culture." Covers body image for boys and girls, cosmetics, fashion, double standards, etc.

Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg on CD
"Here is a definitive audio training workshop on Marshall Rosenberg's proven methods for "resolving the unresolvable" through Nonviolent Communication." Using compassionate communication in everyday life to resolve real and potential conflicts. 5 hrs, 4 CDs.

No Place Called Home National Film Board, DVD

The day to day struggles of a family of seven trying to break the generational cycle of poverty while they move from town to town in search of affordable housing. 57 min.

Coming Out Again: Lesbians Speaking Out About Cancer
Canadian Cancer Society, DVD

"This film delves into the real life experiences that lesbians had during their cancer journeys." Originally created to help people working in cancer care and support areas understand the experiences of lesbians, also has suggestions for using the film as part of a community event. Has booklet that includes definitions, sample questions, FAQs etc.

Her Wits About Her; Self Defense Success Stories by Women
edited by Denise Caignon and Gail Groves

"Offers the vibrant, empowering message that women can fight back, and do so effectively." This is not an instruction manual for protecting yourself. This is a collection of stories from women who were being harassed, threatened, stalked, and attacked and what they did to make themselves safe again.



BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Wednesdays 12:05 to 12:50

May 16th Reflexology and Relaxation

May 23rd 10 Differences between Women and Men that affect Your Health

May 30th Creating Space for Celebrations

At the Women's Health Care Centre, 157 Charlotte Street (beside Wild Rock Outfitters). Bring your lunch; coffee and tea will be served. Please call 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111 for details or to register.

"We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us."

~ Pema Chödrön