



Alcohol and Older Adults

What are the risks of drinking alcohol as an older adult?

As we age, and our bodies and life circumstances change, drinking alcohol can become riskier:

- Your body processes alcohol more slowly and your blood alcohol rises higher after drinking than when you were younger.
- Loss of strength, balance and coordination can increase risk of falls.
- Loneliness and isolation can lead to drinking alcohol to cope.
- Alcohol can negatively affect memory and cognitive abilities.
- Some medications interact badly with alcohol.

If you're worried about your drinking, speak to your healthcare provider or another qualified professional to seek help and support.

Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health: Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines for Older Adults

Recommended drinking limits for adults over the age of 65:



- **FOR WOMEN**, no more than 1 standard alcoholic drink per day, with no more than 5 alcoholic drinks per week in total



- **FOR MEN**, no more than 1–2 standard alcoholic drinks per day, with no more than 7 alcoholic drinks per week in total

Your age, body weight and other health conditions will impact how you respond to alcohol. As you reach your 70s, 80s and 90s, consider decreasing your alcohol consumption below these guidelines and perhaps even not drinking at all, especially if you have a health condition.

For these guidelines, “a drink” means: ▶▶▶



Beer
341 ml (12 oz.)
5% alcohol content



**Cider/
Cooler**
341 ml (12 oz.)
5% alcohol content



Wine
142 ml (5 oz.)
12% alcohol content



Distilled Alcohol
(rye, gin, rum, etc.)
43 ml (1.5 oz.)
40% alcohol content