

Care
comes first.

Welcome to Happy Hour

How Alcohol Affects Women

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- “To Health!” – what my friends are always drinking to before they fall down.

~Phyllis Diller

- “You’re only an alcoholic if you drink more than your doctor...”

~Dr. Winer



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- Why do we care about alcohol?
- Isn't it a normal part of life?
- Isn't it supposed to be good for you?
- Prohibition failed after all!



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- “For too many American women, alcoholism is more than a favorite theme on talk shows and the daytime soaps. **It knocks 15 years off a woman's life span.**”
- Alcohol misuse is the third leading cause of death (both direct and indirect) among women between the ages of 35 and 55.”

~Rodale Book: Total Health For Women



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- “Alcoholism is involved in one-third of suicides, one-fourth of accidental deaths and one-half of traffic deaths.”
- “It also contributes to thousands of birth defects and divorces. And it is something that most women are likely to wrestle with alone.”

~Rodale Book: Total Health For Women



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- USPSTF, AAFP, 2010 Healthy People:
 - All recommend routine screening for alcohol misuse amongst adults
- High association with
 - **depression**
 - **high blood pressure**
 - **liver disease**
 - some association with **breast cancer**



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Prevalence of Chronic Illnesses

Alcohol Abuse/Dependence and Other Chronic Conditions [5, 6]²⁴²⁵²⁶²⁷

Chronic Condition	Total	Rate per 1,000 Persons	
		18-44 yrs	45-64 yrs
<i>Alcohol abuse/dependence</i>	136.0	164.5	122.0
<i>Drug abuse/dependence</i>	74.6	108.5	33.6
Arthritis	127.3	48.9	253.8
Hypertension	113.6	56.0	229.1
Heart conditions	75.9	36.1	118.9
Chronic bronchitis	49.2	44.5	53.7
Asthma	47.2	41.3	41.8
Diseases of urinary system	28.5	30.1	38.1
Diabetes	26.6	10.7	58.2



President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform 1993

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- “You’re only an alcoholic if you drink more than your doctor...”

~”Dr. Winer”



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How Many, How Much?

- One drink per day for most women (two for men) typically does not create a problem
- One drink equals:
 - One 12-ounce bottle of beer
 - One 5-ounce glass of wine
 - 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits
- If you take medication, have a medical condition that can be made worse by alcohol, are pregnant or plan to engage in activities that require your full awareness (such as driving), you should not drink



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**12 oz. of
beer or
cooler**



12 oz.

**8-9 oz. of
malt liquor**
8.5 oz. shown in a
12-oz. glass that,
if full, would hold
about 1.5
standard drinks of
malt liquor



8.5 oz

**5 oz. of
table wine**



5 oz.

**3-4 oz. of
fortified
wine**
(such as sherry or
port) 3.5 oz.
shown



3.5 oz.

**2-3 oz. of
cordial,
liqueur, or
aperitif**
2.5 oz. shown



2.5 oz.

**1.5 oz. of
brandy**
(a single jigger)



1.5 oz.

**1.5 oz. of
spirits**
(a single jigger of 80-
proof gin, vodka,
whiskey, etc.) Shown
straight and in a
highball glass with
ice to show level
before adding mixer



1.5 oz.

Note: People buy many of these drinks in containers that hold multiple standard drinks. For example, malt liquor is often sold in 16-, 22-, or 40 oz. containers that hold between two and five standard drinks, and table wine is typically sold in 25 oz (750 ml.) bottles that hold five standard drinks.



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- "Normal drinkers never *need* a drink."

~Sheila B. Blume, M.D.



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How does alcohol affect women?

- Alcohol mixes with the water content in our bodies
- Women have less body water (and less body mass) than men – which means alcohol levels are more highly concentrated in women
- Alcohol dehydrogenase less active in the stomach of women
- High alcohol levels have been shown to affect women's serum estrogen levels
- Alcohol dependence and related medical problems – such as brain, heart and liver damage – progress more rapidly in women



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What is Alcohol Misuse Disorder?

- Can include physical, mental and behavioral disorders
- Symptoms may include:
 - Depression
 - Nervousness
 - Insomnia
 - Poor memory or concentration
 - Self-neglect
 - Using alcohol to address sexual problems, relationship issues
- Advanced misuse can also cause issues at home and at work



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- Substance misuse, abuse, and dependence is a three-fold disease
 - Physical, Psychological, Spiritual
 - All three must be addressed for successful treatment
 - **All three are important for anyone who desires a happy fulfilled life, regardless if you have a problem with substances**



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- “If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.”

~Marcus Aurelius



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Stress

- There's no doubt that these are the most stressful times that most of us have ever experienced
- Stress can cause anxiousness, sadness, even anger
- Alcohol use can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and depression
- Alcohol can also disrupt sleep patterns, vital for our bodies to “recharge”
- Alcohol can affect our immune system; weaken it



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Daily Stressors

- **Environmental**
 - Pollution
 - Noise
 - Barking dogs
 - Crime
- **Family/Relationship**
 - Friends
 - Children
 - Spouses
 - Parents
- **Work**
 - High workload
 - Job dissatisfaction
 - Office politics
 - Conflict with co-workers
- **Social**
 - Financial pressures
 - Unemployment
 - Isolation



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Life Stressors

- Life stressors are caused by major life changes
 - Career changes
 - Marriage
 - Separation or divorce
 - Moving
 - Pregnancy
 - Illness or injury
 - Retirement
- The faster or more dramatic the life change, the more stressful it can become



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Internal Stressors

- It is important to realize that stress can also be self-generated
 - Uncertainty or worries
 - Pessimistic attitude
 - Self-criticism
 - Unrealistic expectations or beliefs
 - Perfectionism
 - Low self-esteem
 - Excessive or unexpressed anger



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Stress reduction tips

- A healthy lifestyle helps naturally reduce stress – remember, alcohol can make stress worse!
- Exercise regularly (30 minutes at least 3 times per week) to release stress and tension
- Attempt yoga or meditation
- Make healthy eating choices – balanced meals keep your energy up and leave you better equipped to deal with stress
- Reduce caffeine, sugar and alcohol intake
- Get plenty of sleep (6 to 8 hours per night)



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Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-Step Programs

- Gold standard for adjunctive treatment
- Not for everyone
- Any form of emotional, spiritual support is effective; sports group, church/temple group; any support group where you feel heard
- “You alone must do it, but you don’t have to do it alone.”



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References

- 1. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**
- 2. Medscape Medical News**
- 3. WebMD**
- 4. From the Rodale book, Total Health For Women**

For more information, visit the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Web site at <http://niaaa.nih.gov>



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