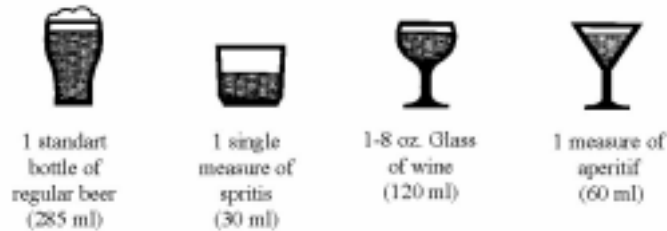


# Mental Disorders in Primary Care

## Alcohol Use Disorders

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(Note: net alcohol content of a standard drink is 8-13 gr of ethanol)

### Common symptoms

#### 'High risk' drinking

##### Men

More than 3 standard drinks/day (21 drinks/week)

##### Women

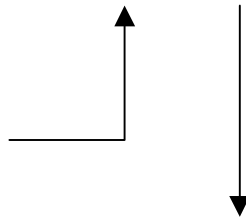
More than 2 standard drinks/day (14 drinks/week)



Many have no symptoms but are at risk

#### Psychological

- Poor concentration
- Sleep problems
- Less able to think clearly
- Depression
- Anxiety/ stress



- Difficulties and arguments with family/ friends
- Difficulties performing at work/ home
- Withdrawal from friends and social activities
- Legal problems

#### Physical

- Hangovers/ blackouts
- Injuries
- Tiredness I lack of energy
- Weight gain
- Poor coordination
- High blood pressure
- Impotence
- Vomiting/ nausea
- Gastritis/ diarrhoea
- Liver disease
- Brain damage



### Alcohol problems are treatable

Alcohol problems *do not* mean weakness

Alcohol problems *do not* mean you are a bad person

Alcohol problems *do* mean that you have a medical problem or a lifestyle problem

### What treatments can help?

**Both therapies are most often needed**

#### Supportive therapy for:

- to reduce drinking
- to stop drinking
- for stress
- prevention of life problems
- education of the family members for support

#### Medication for:

- moderate to severe withdrawal
- physical problems
- relapse prevention

## Set goals: Acceptable levels of drinking

Who?	How many drinks?	How often?
Men	No more than 3 standard drinks	Each day - only for five days/wk
Women	No more than 2 standard drinks	Each day - only for five days/wk (2 non-alcohol drinking days/wk)

—————→ *Keep in mind: the less the person drinks the better it is*

- Pregnancy
- Physical alcohol dependence
- Physical problems made worse by drinking
- Driving, biking
- Operating machinery
- Exercising (swimming, jogging, etc.)

—————→ **Recommendation is not to drink at all**

## Determine action: How to reach target levels

- Keep track of your alcohol consumption
- Turn to family and/or friends for support
- Have one or more non-alcoholic drinks before each drink
- Delay the time of day that you drink
- Engage in alternative activities at times that you would normally drink, e.g. when you are feeling bored or stressed
- Switch to low alcoholic drinks
- Decide on non-drinking days (2 days or more per week)
- Take smaller sips
- Eat before starting to drink
- Join a support group
- Quench your thirst with non-alcoholic drinks
- Avoid or reduce time spent with heavy-drinking friends
- Avoid bars, cafes or former drinking places

## Review progress: Are you keeping on track?

### Questions to ask

- Am I keeping to my goals?
- What are the difficult times?
- Am I losing motivation?
- Do I need more help?

### Progress tips

- Every week record how much you drink over the week
- Avoid these difficult situations or plan activities to help you cope with them
- Think back to your original reasons for cutting down or stopping
- Come back for help, talk to family and friends



# **Alcohol Use Disorders**

**Alcohol can become a problem**

# Alcohol Use Disorders

## Alcohol can become a problem

Some people find it difficult to control their drinking. This *does not mean* that you are *weak* or that you have *a bad personality*. It simply means that alcohol is addictive when taken on a regular basis and in large quantities.

## Effects of alcohol

Drinking alcohol affects people in many ways. Below is a list of some of the common physical, emotional and psychological effects of alcohol. Think about each item and mark the ones that apply to you.

### Physical effects

- less energy
- sleep problems
- weight gain
- high blood pressure
- impotence
- poor coordination
- nausea/vomiting
- gastritis/diarrhea
- injury
- liver damage
- slowing of mental functions
- memory loss
- accidents and injuries
- blackouts and hangovers

### Emotional/social effects

- depression
- anxiety/stress
- irritability
- anger
- relationship problems
- problems at work
- financial problems
- family problems
- legal problems

## What is low risk drinking?

To avoid the problems listed above it is important to make sure that you do not drink too much or too often. Guidelines for low risk drinking are presented below. Individuals differ in terms of what level will cause harm

*Always keep in your mind that the less you drink the better it is for you.*

### Limits for men

- Up to 3 standard drinks/day
- Keep below 15 standard drinks/week
- No alcohol drinking for at least 2 days/week

### Limits for women

- Up to 2 standard drinks/day
- Keep below 10 standard drinks/week
- No alcohol drinking for at least 2 days/week

**A standard drink refers to:**



1 standart  
bottle of  
regular beer  
(285 ml)



1 single  
measure of  
spritis  
(30 ml)



1-8 oz. Glass  
of wine  
(120 ml)



1 measure of  
aperitif  
(60 ml)

*It is important to note that there are situations in which you should not drink any alcohol:*

- During pregnancy
- When driving a car or motorbike
- When operating machinery
- Before exercise

*It is important to stop drinking alcohol altogether if:*

- You have had severe problems with alcohol previously
- If due to alcohol you have had major problems at home or at work
- If you tried to cut down your consumption and were not successful
- If it annoys you when other people express concern about your drinking
- If you feel guilty about your drinking
- If you get the shakes and/or nausea in the morning
- If you regularly take an alcoholic drink first thing in the morning
- You have a health problem that could be made worse by alcohol  
e.g. *liver disease, diabetes, hypertension*

Over the next week, use the form below to record how many standard drinks of alcohol you consume.

**Remember wine and beer are alcoholic drinks.**

**Drinks consumed**

Week	Lunch	Dinner	Other
Monday	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____

In a typical day how many standard drinks do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

On how many days in a typical week do you drink? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this above or below the safe limits for your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

## About detoxification

The first part of treatment if you are physically dependent on alcohol is detoxification. **Detoxification** refers to a period of time when you stop taking alcohol. As a result your body has to re-adjust to a normal state without alcohol and you are likely to experience symptoms of alcohol withdrawal. The most common symptoms include nausea, shaking, sweating, irregular heart beat, anxiety and fatigue. These symptoms gradually improve over 3 to 5 days. Other more serious symptoms include fits, confusion about the day, time or where you are. You may experience hallucinations, that is, seeing or hearing things that do not exist. If you have ever experienced any of the serious symptoms previously, you should contact your physician immediately or go to a clinic for **detoxification**. Otherwise it is safe to detoxify at home, following the advice of a physician. Medication can help to reduce unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal during this phase. However, there is **no medication** that will **cure** an alcohol problem.

There are a range of non-drug strategies to help you to stop drinking or to reduce the amount of alcohol that drink. Natural and self-recovery are possible strategies.

We will describe these strategies to help you to overcome your *drinking* problem. You might find that some strategies are more useful than others. Remember you can have the support of your family and/or friends to overcome your alcohol problem.

## Difficult times

Changing habits like drinking can be difficult. There will be times when you may drink more than what you have planned or there might be times when it is very difficult not to drink or limit your drinking.

Can you think of any difficult times when you had problems in controlling your drinking?

- **Where were you?**
- **Who were you with?**
- **What were you doing?**
- **What were you feeling?**

Now look at the list below. Mark the situations or feelings that tend to make you drink more. If you have other similar situations, write them below. Discuss your list with your physician, counselor, family member or a close friend.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I go to a party                | <input type="checkbox"/> when I am feeling angry         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I go to dinner                 | <input type="checkbox"/> when I am feeling stressed      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I go to the pub                | <input type="checkbox"/> when I want to relax            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> meeting people in social situations | <input type="checkbox"/> when I have had a difficult day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I am with friends who drink    | <input type="checkbox"/> when I have had an argument     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I am on my own                 | <input type="checkbox"/> when I am in a celebrating mood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I am feeling in a low mood     | <input type="checkbox"/> when I invite friends over      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> when I am feeling anxious           |  |

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## Dealing with difficult times

Now you have the list of the most difficult times for you to resist drinking. If it is at all possible<sup>1</sup> avoiding difficult situations will be very useful. Your initial strategy should be to reduce the temptation to drink.

However, in the long term, avoiding difficult situations may not be practical so it is also important to work out strategies to cope with difficult situations. Take a look at some of the strategies below and mark those that would be useful to you.

- If you have the habit of going to pubs after work or have the habit of meeting your friends there  
*try to organise a different social activity, e.g. going to see a film, or going to a gym or a park*
- If you drink mainly at night  
*try to keep yourself busy, go to places where you cannot drink, e.g., movies*
- If you drink when you are with friends who drink heavily  
*try to avoid contact with these friends*
- If you drink when you are alone  
*reduce the amount of time that you spend alone, e.g. join a club or a support group or increase time doing activities with family members*
- If you drink when you are bored  
*try to plan enjoyable activities, e.g. shows, movies, exercise, hobbies etc.*
- If you drink when you are stressed  
*learn relaxation techniques or engage in relaxing activities, e.g. gardening*
- If you drink when you feel depressed or if you think that drinking calms your anxiety  
*you must consult your doctor about it*

## How to reduce your drinking

- quench your thirst with non-alcoholic drinks before having an alcoholic drink
- avoid salty snacks when you are drinking
- eat before drinking; It will make you feel more full and then you will drink less
- have one or more non-alcoholic drinks before each alcoholic drink
- try to take small sips of your drink, avoid gulping, and if possible use a straw
- dilute your drinks, e.g. add soda to wine and mixers to spirits

***Make a list of your most difficult times and write below a few strategies to help you In each of these situations***

Difficult times

e.g., *Friday night at work*

Strategies

*invite a non drinking friend to go and see a movie*

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## Stick to your goals

As we have mentioned before, there may be times when you will find it difficult to stick to your goals. You might find that you had a few more drinks than you had planned to drink.

***Do not get discouraged - do not think of yourself as a failure. Learn from each occasion. Keep on trying***

### Remember

- do not *give* in because you have had a bad experience
- take It one day at a time and gradually it will get easier
- you need your family and friends to support you
- every time you stop yourself from doing something as a habit you are one step closer to breaking the habit
- the craving for alcohol will decrease if you mentally occupy yourself with something else
- you should consult your physician and/or counsellor concerning your difficulties

## 1 Identify reasons for changing

Thinking about reasons for changing is an important first step. It will help to motivate you. First think carefully about your reasons for wanting to change. Then have a look at the list below and mark those that apply to you. If *you have other reasons* write them down *and discuss them with your doctor or counselor*.

- you will feel better
- you will have more energy
- you will lose excess weight
- you will sleep better
- you will save money
- you won't have any hangovers
- you will work better
- your performance at work will improve
- your health will improve
- your family life will improve
- your memory will improve
- there will be less conflict at home
- you won't be thinking about your next drink all the time
- you will prevent serious health problems

## 2 Setting goals

You have to set goals. This will help you to change.

Here are some suggestions about setting goals.

- if you are trying to stop ***drinking altogether***, it is important to set a definite 'quit date'.
- if you are trying to ***reduce your drinking***, it will help if you plan which days you will drink alcohol and how many drinks you will have on each of these days. Make sure that you have at least two alcohol-free days in a week.
- it also helps to record the number of drinks that you have each day. Keeping a record will remind you to cut down and it will help you to keep track of whether you are following your goals.



## Important things to remember

- Keep your drinking at a level which is within the safe limits
- Remember to have two alcohol-free days a week
- Be realistic; you may want to plan your drinks for social occasions
- Remember not to drink more than your limit

Here you will find an example of a 'diary' form. Read it carefully, then on the similar form below, plan and write your goals at least one week ahead.

### Example of diary form

	<i>Week 1</i>	
	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks consumed</i>
Monday	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
Tuesday	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
Wednesday	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>
Thursday	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
Friday	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
Saturday	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
Sunday	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>

### Diary form

	<i>Week 1</i>		<i>Week 2</i>		<i>Week 3</i>	
	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>
Monday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

### Diary form

	<i>Week 1</i>		<i>Week 2</i>		<i>Week 3</i>	
	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>	<i>Drinking goals</i>	<i>Standard drinks</i>
Monday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*If you cannot achieve your goals it is important that you ask yourself 'why not?' or 'what went wrong?'. This might help you plan different strategies in the future. Use the standard drink diagram to record how much you drink and to set your drinking goals.*

This page will be filled by local centers or attending Primary Care Providers

**Notes**

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**Medication information**

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**Self-help groups**

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**Counselors**

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**Doctors**

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**Help lines**

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**Suggested reading**

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**Other materials**

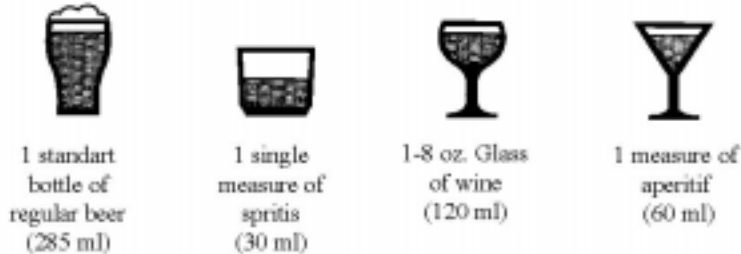
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# ICD-10 PC: Questionnaire for

# Alcohol Use Disorders

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1 standard drink =



I. How many standard drinks of alcohol do you have in a typical day when you are drinking?

II. How many days a week do you have a drink containing alcohol?

**If above the limit, or if there is a regular/hazardous drinking pattern, continue below**

In the *last year* have you had any of the following? Mark the relevant box.

1. Have you been unable to stop, reduce or control your drinking?
  2. Have you ever felt such a strong desire or urge to drink that you could not resist it?
  3. Did stopping or cutting down on your drinking ever cause you problems such as:
    - the shakes
    - being unable to sleep
    - feeling nervous or restless
    - sweating
    - heart beating fast
    - headaches
    - fits or seizures
  4. Have you ever continued to drink when you knew you had physical problems that might be made worse by drinking?
  5. Has anyone expressed concern about your drinking; for example, your family, friends or your doctor?
- 

**I. During *the last month* have you been limited in one or more of the following areas most of the time:**

- Self care: bathing, dressing, eating?
- Family relations: spouse, children, relatives?
- Going to work or school?
- Doing housework or household tasks?
- Social activities, seeing friends, hobbies?
- Remembering things?

**II. Because of these problems doing the *last month*:**

How many days were you unable to fully carry out your usual daily activities? \_\_\_\_\_

How many days did you spend in bed in order to rest? \_\_\_\_\_