

# Alcohol Use and Liver Disease

General Health Guidelines:	• Excessive alcohol use is the third leading lifestyle- related cause of death of the nation.
	Alcohol affects all body systems!
	Learn the risk and health effects of alcohol consumption.
Green Flags — All Clear 📜	What this means
If you:	
• Do not drink or if you do, drink in moderation.	• You are taking steps in taking care of your health.
Keep up the great work!	
Yellow Flags — Caution 🔌	What this means
If you:	
Drink heavily and are frequently intoxicated	<ul> <li>You are at increased risk for accidents and injuries</li> </ul>
<ul><li>Risky behaviors e.g. driving after drinking</li><li>Loss of appetite</li></ul>	You are at increased risk for health complications
Regularly lose control over your alcohol	You may benefit from counseling
intake, drink to cope with difficulties, or to avoid feeling bad	You may benefit from alcohol treatment
<ul> <li>A need to drink to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms</li> </ul>	Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.
<ul> <li>Black out (have little or no memory of events before passing out)</li> </ul>	Name:
Rapid weight gain or growing abdomen	Number:
	Instructions:
If you notice a Yellow Flag, work	closely with your health care team.
Red Flags—Stop and Think 📜	What this means
lf you:	
<ul> <li>Shake or have tremors in your hands and legs, or have a seizure</li> <li>Have hallucinations</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>You need to be evaluated by a healthcare professional immediately.</li> </ul>
Have nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and dehydration	Name:
<ul> <li>Vomit blood or have black stool</li> <li>Have confusion, agitation, sweating, rapid heart</li> </ul>	Number:
rate and high blood pressure indicating delirium	Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1
<ul><li>tremens ("DTs")</li><li>Have loss of consciousness or fainting</li><li>Feel suicidal</li></ul>	Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1
If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!	

## Alcohol Use & Liver Disease

ging & ong Term

are

Southeast Washington



### **Alcohol Fast Facts**

- Alcoholism, also known as "alcohol dependence" is a disease that includes alcohol craving and continued drinking despite repeated alcohol-related problems, such as losing a job or getting into trouble with the law. Approximately 80,000 deaths are attributed to excessive alcohol use each year in the United States.
- Alcohol affects all body systems. It acts as a depressant and slows reaction time that leads to impaired judgment and decreased coordination. High intake of alcohol can cause mood swings, behavior changes, and problems with your ability to walk. Other side effects include dilation of blood vessels and increased stomach acid.
- Moderate drinking is defined as up to four alcoholic drinks for men and three for women in any single day.
- Heavy drinkers suffer a variety of alcohol-related problems including damage to the brain, (including strokes), stomach, heart disease (high blood pressure, an enlarged heart and/or irregular heartbeat and heart attacks), elevated cholesterol levels, as well as diseases of the liver and pancreas. They are also ten times more likely to get cancer than those who drink moderately or not at all. Cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, and breast are increased.
- Your liver can only metabolize about one drink per hour, so drinking more than that causes intoxication and impairment.
- Binge drinking is generally defined as the consumption of 5 or more drinks on 1 occasion.
- Each year, thousands of people choke on their own vomit while intoxicated.
- Alcohol poisoning, a medical emergency results from high blood alcohol levels that suppress the central nervous system and can cause loss of consciousness, low blood pressure and body temperature, coma, respiratory depression, or death.

#### What can you do?

- Talk openly to your health care provider. There is help out there for you if you are interested.
- Avoid mixing alcohol and over the counter or prescription medicines.
- Avoid alcohol if you have had a previous hemorrhagic stroke, have heart failure, or if you have been told you have weak heart or an enlarged heart.
- Avoid alcohol if you have liver or pancreatic disease.
- Contact the addiction treatment helpline: 1-800-610-HOPE (4673) Washington Recovery Help Line, 24-Hour Help for Substance Abuse, Problem Gambling & Mental Health 866-789-1511 TTY 206-461-3219

### Southeast Washington Aging and Long Term Care

At Aging and Long Term Care, we believe every adult deserves to live with dignity. We connect seniors, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to a full range of free and other community resources designed to offer you choice, improve your quality of life and respect your independence.

Yakima County: 509-469-0500 -- ADRCYakima@dshs.wa.gov

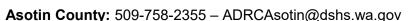
Kittitas County: 509-925-8765 - ADRCKittitas@dshs.wa.gov

Benton/ Franklin County: 509-735-0315 - ADRCBenton-Franklin@dshs.wa.gov

Walla Walla County: 509-529-6470 - ADRCWallaWalla@dshs.wa.gov

Columbia County: 509-382-4787 -- ADRCColumbia@dshs.wa.gov

Garfield County: 509-843-3563 – ADRCGarfield@dshs.wa.gov



This document was modified, with permission, from Red Flags documents produced by King County Aging and Disability Services WWW.ALTCwashington.com