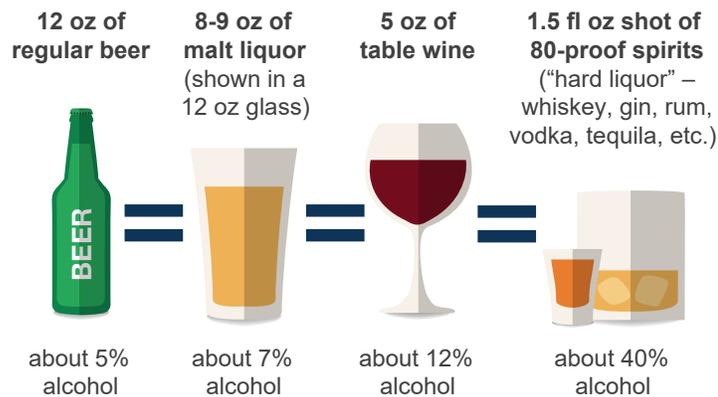


# Alcohol Misuse: Facts About Risky Drinking

## How Much Is Too Much?

It is easy to drink a lot without realizing it. A standard drink contains about 0.6 fluid ounces of pure alcohol, but many drinks, like a large 22-ounce beer or a mixed cocktail, contain more than one standard drink.

The image below highlights examples of what a standard drink looks like for different beverage types.



## Risky Drinking

Risk levels for drinking are determined by the amount you drink during the week and on any single occasion. Use the chart below to determine your level of drinking.

Level of Drinking	Number of Drinks	
	Male	Female
Low risk	No more than 4 per day or 14 per week	No more than 3 per day or 7 per week
Heavy	More than 14 per week	More than 7 per week
Binge	5 or more per single occasion	4 or more per single occasion

## Preventing Risky Drinking

Monitoring your alcohol use can help you prevent risky drinking:

- Set a daily and weekly drinking limit
- Pace your drinking
- Record how much you drink each day
- Avoid situations and people or places that cause you to drink
- Ask a friend who does not drink to help you stay within your limit

## Indicators of Risky Drinking

The box below lists behaviors associated with risky and problematic drinking. If you respond yes to any of the indicators in the past year, read the section on Where to Seek Help.

- Drink more, or longer, than you intend
- Try to cut down or stop drinking, but are not able to
- Have to drink more than you once did to get the effect you want
- Continue to drink even though it makes you feel depressed or anxious or adds to another health problem
- Spend a lot of time drinking
- Find that drinking often interferes with daily activities, family, friends and/or work
- More than once have been arrested or had other legal problems due to drinking
- Experience symptoms of withdrawal when you don't drink

## Where to Seek Help

If you think that you, or someone you know, may be engaging in risky drinking, seek help from medical providers, leaders, or battle buddies.

Below are some additional resources:

- Contact your primary care manager for referrals and medical assistance
- Military Health System – information about addiction, substances, treatments and getting help [health.mil](http://health.mil)
- TRICARE Alcohol Awareness – information and support resources on excessive drinking in the military [tricare.mil/HealthWellness/Alcohol](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/Alcohol)
- Military OneSource – online, telephone, and face-to-face non-medical counseling [militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil) | (800) 342-9647
- Psychological Health Resource Center – a 24/7 anonymous information call center (866) 966-1020
- Military Crisis Line – a 24/7 anonymous crisis hot line (800) 273-8255 and press "1"

## Impact of Risky Drinking

Excessive drinking places your safety and health at risk. See below for some of the effects of risky drinking.



- Depression
- Aggressive behavior
- Anxiety
- Alcohol dependence
- Insomnia
- Memory loss



- Stroke
- Heart failure
- Hypertension
- Premature aging



- Frequent colds
- Reduced resistance to infection
- Increased risk of pneumonia



- Anemia
- Vitamin deficiency
- Blood clotting
- Bleeding



- Cancer of the throat and mouth
- Breast cancer
- Inflammation of the pancreas



- Stomach inflammation
- Diarrhea
- Malnutrition



- Risk of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, which include physical, behavioral and learning disabilities



- Painful nerves
- Numb, tingling toes
- Impaired sensations leading to falls



- Type II Diabetes
- Liver damage



- Motor vehicle crashes
- Failure to fulfill obligations at work, school and home



- Men: Erectile dysfunction
- Women: Unintended pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases



- Injury
- Legal problems
- Violence
- Impacts service member's readiness
- Violent crime

## References

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