Canada’s Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

Reducing Alcohol Misuse: How Canada’s Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines can help communities and individuals consider a culture of moderation
Agenda

- Alcohol in Alberta
- Canada’s Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines
- Key Points
- Summary of Benefits
The economic cost of alcohol abuse in Alberta was estimated at $1.6 billion.

Specifically, alcohol abuse cost Albertans:
- $855 million in lost productivity,
- $407 million in direct healthcare costs, and
- $275 million for law enforcement.
Alcohol and Prevalence
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- Lifetime Use
- Past 30 days
- Exceeds LRDG - among drinkers (chronic)
- Exceeds LRDG - among drinkers (acute)

Legend:
- Male
- Female
- 15-24
- 25+
The Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

• Provide consistent, current information across Canada to help people make informed choices and moderate their drinking.
• Are intended for adults aged 25–65 years who choose to drink.
• Focus on how to reduce the risk of alcohol-related harms in both the short and long term.
Standard Drink Units

- 341 ml (12 oz.) bottle of 5% alcohol content (beer, cider or cooler)
- 142 ml (5 oz.) glass of wine with 12% alcohol content
- 43 ml (1.5 oz.) serving of 40% distilled alcohol content (rye, gin, rum, etc.)
Guideline 1 – Your Limits

Reduce your long-term health risks by drinking no more than
– 10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days.
– 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days.

Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit.
Guideline 2 – Special Occasions

• Reduce your risk of injury and harm by drinking no more than 3 drinks (for women) and 4 drinks (for men) on any single occasion.

• Plan to drink in a safe environment. Stay within the weekly limits outlined in Guideline 1.
Guideline 3 – When Zero Is the Limit

Do not drink when you are
• driving a vehicle or using machinery and tools
• taking medicine or other drugs that interact with alcohol
• doing any kind of dangerous physical activity
• living with mental or physical health problems
• living with alcohol dependence
• pregnant or planning to be pregnant
• responsible for the safety of others
• making important decisions

If you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or about to breastfeed, the safest choice is to drink no alcohol at all.
Guideline 5 – Delay your Drinking

- Alcohol can harm the way the body and brain develop.
- Teens should speak with their parents about drinking. If they choose to drink, they should do so under parental guidance; never more than 1 to 2 drinks at a time, and never more than 1 to 2 times per week.
- Teens should plan ahead, follow local alcohol laws and consider safe drinking practices.
- Youth in their late teens to age 24 years should never exceed the daily and weekly limits outlined in Guideline 1.
Key Points

• Low risk is not no risk. Drinking alters your perceptions and judgment. So, to have no risk, don’t drink.
• One size does not fit all. Genetic make-up, weight, sex and age affect how alcohol is metabolized. As does medication use, hunger, fatigue and stress.
• Know the standard size of each drink.
• Drink safely. Eat, stay hydrated, and take breaks from drinking. Pre-plan, stick to your budget, and stay close to your friends. Don’t mix drinks and don’t drink every day.
Summary of Benefits of LRDG

• Provides a consistent definition and platform for dialogue.
• Standard Drink Units definition, but also the additional factors that can influence moderation.
• Discussion starters
• Allows for further consideration for particular audiences
Thank you.

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