

Healthy Aging Medication & Alcohol Facts

Medications should help you feel better and be healthy. It's important that you use your medications safely and correctly. Talk about all your prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, herbal and dietary supplements along with your use of alcohol with your pharmacist, nurse, and/or doctor.






Medication Facts:

- Take medication as prescribed and on schedule. Medication misuse is when you take more or less than what is prescribed, take it inconsistently or out of routine, use someone else's medication, accidentally combine the same generic and brand medication, take a wrong dose or skip a dose, use the medicine not for the reason prescribed and/or take the medicine with alcohol when recommended not to.
- When prescribed medications are not taken as directed, this causes problems. Taking medications correctly will help you to avoid unhealthy "interactions." Interactions happen when medications react with each other or with alcohol, possibly causing harmful side effects.
- "Over-the-counter" medications and supplements can cause problems when taken incorrectly, in excess of the recommended amount and/or with alcohol or prescribed medication. These include anything you can buy without a prescription (i.e., aspirin, pain relievers, cold or allergy medicine, antacids, herbal and dietary supplements).

Alcohol Facts:

- Older adults are more sensitive to alcohol than younger adults. Maximum recommended drinking limits for adults 65 and older are one drink per day for men and less than one drink per day for women. *(See standard drinking chart below.)*
- Alcohol can cause or make health problems worse. It can contribute to falls and other accidents, trouble sleeping, heart problems, memory problems, anxiety, depression, changes in eating habits and confusion.
- Alcohol can be especially risky for people with medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, liver disease and dementia.

Standard drinking chart
One Standard drink is equal to:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | One glass (5 oz.) wine | |  |
|  | One can (12 oz) beer or ale | | |
|  | One single shot (1.5 oz.) hard liquor | | |
|  | One small glass (4 oz.) sherry, liqueur, or aperitif | | |

Healthy Aging Medication & Alcohol Tips

*Family, work, hobbies, travel . . . all this can keep you busy.
Don't let problems with medications or alcohol slow you down.
Follow these tips to get the most out of life!*

Medication Tips:

- **Make a list of your medications using a medication chart.**
See your local REAP Counselor for free information on how to do this 1-866-634-9412.
- **Bring your list, chart and/or all your medications to all your doctor visits.**
- **Take medications as prescribed and on schedule.** If you accidentally forget to take a medication or have any questions or side effects, contact your pharmacist, nurse and/or doctor.
- **Don't share your prescription medications with others or take anyone else's medicine.** Store safely and discard unused medications.

Alcohol Tips:

- **Let your pharmacist, nurse and/or doctor know if you drink,** even if it's just once in a while, so you can be as safe as possible.
- **Look for warning labels on medications.**
- **If you take sleeping pills, pain pills, or pills for anxiety (nerves), alcohol can be especially dangerous.** Talk with your pharmacist, nurse and/or doctor before you drink alcohol.

For more information and resources:

Call the Northern NE Poison Center about Medications & Pill Identification
1-800-222-1222 TTY available- dial 7-1-1 for Relay Services.

Information on and Referrals to Programs and Services
Call NH ServiceLink toll-free at 1-866-634-9412

Help for Alcohol or Drug Problems
Call NH Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services at 1-800-804-0909 (NH)
or visit the web site www.eldersubstancemisuse.org

For Mental Health Concerns
Call Bureau of Behavioral Health at 1-800-852-3345, Ext. 5094
Contact National Alliance on Mental Illness NH at 1-800-242-6264 or www.naminh.org