

Tips for Cutting Down on Drinking

Small changes can make a big difference when it comes to drinking. Try to do 2 or 3 of these tips in the next week to help you cut back on drinking. You can try more as you go.

Keep track

Keep track of how much you drink. Take note in your phone how many drinks you've had.

Count and measure

Know the standard drinking sizes so you really know how much you're drinking. Measure drinks at home. When you're out, you may be getting more alcohol than you think. With wine, ask a server not to top off your glass.

Set goals

Choose how many days a week you want to drink and how many drinks you will have on those days. Pick some days when you don't drink. There are healthy drinking limits for women and men.

- For men, have less than 4 drinks a day or less than 14 drinks a week.
- For women and people over 65, have less than 3 drinks a day or less than 7 drinks a week.
- It may be healthier for you to drink less than these limits, or not at all. Talk to your CHN doctor about how much is ok for you to drink.

Pace and space

When you do drink, pace yourself. Sip slowly. Have no more than 1 drink an hour. Have a drink spacer— have water, soda, or juice with no alcohol every other drink.

Eat before you drink

Don't drink on an empty stomach. Eating before you drink helps you absorb alcohol so you won't feel the alcohol so much.

Know your "no."

You will be offered a drink at times when you don't want one. Have a polite, solid "no, thanks" ready. The faster you can say no these offers, the less likely you are to give in to having a drink.



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Find other things to do

Fill your free time with other things to do. Find new hobbies and relationships. If you have counted on alcohol to be more comfortable in social situations, manage how you feel, or deal with problems, find other, healthy ways to deal with those parts of your life.

Stay away from triggers

What makes you want to drink? If certain people or places make you drink even when you don't want to, try to avoid them. If certain activities, times of day, or feelings make you want to drink, plan something else to do instead of drinking. If drinking at home is a problem for you, don't keep alcohol in your home.

Plan to deal with urges

When you can't avoid a trigger and you want to drink:

- Remind yourself why you have decided to drink less, or not at all.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Do a healthy activity that will take your mind off drinking. You could work out or start a new hobby.
- Instead of fighting the feeling, ride it out without giving into it. Think of your desire to drink like a wave. It will soon pass.

If you want to stop drinking...

The tips on this page are helpful. But if you think you may have a problem with alcohol and want to stop drinking, don't go it alone. If you drink a lot now, suddenly stopping drinking can be dangerous. Talk to your CHN doctor today to plan a safe way to stop drinking.