



# Quick Tips: Cutting Back On Drinking

## Get started

Experts say that for the best health, men should have no more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day. And women should have no more than 1 drink a day.

## TIPS ABOUT CHANGING YOUR HABITS

- **Know your reasons.** Write down your reasons for wanting to cut back (for example, to lower blood pressure or to lose weight). You're more likely to be successful if you know exactly why you want to change.
- **Set some specific goals.** You're not as likely to be successful if your goal is just to "drink less." Have a long-term goal, like lowering your blood pressure or losing weight. And set some short-term goals that will get you there, like having "no-drink" days.
- **Have a plan for dealing with barriers.** Expect slip-ups. When you have one, think about what led to it. You can use this information to avoid a similar result next time.
- **Get support.** Changing habits is usually easier when you get support from friends and family. Tell them what you're trying to do, and ask them to help.
- **Reward yourself.** Plan to treat yourself every time you reach one of your goals. It could be a night at the movies, a new pair of shoes, or just some quiet time to yourself.

## TIPS FOR CUTTING BACK ON DRINKING

- **Try new approaches.**
  - Pay attention to why you're having a drink. Is it just habit? For example, don't drink just because it's 6 p.m. or because it's Saturday night.
  - Teach yourself to drink slowly and really savor the taste. It may help to use only expensive liquor.
  - Or try the opposite approach. Buy really cheap liquor that doesn't taste as good.
  - Use smaller glasses for your drinks.
- **Find substitutes.**
  - Find some favorite nonalcoholic drinks that you can drink regularly. If you like sweet drinks, find a fruit drink you like or try iced tea with honey. If you prefer drinks that aren't sweet, try tomato juice or tonic or soda water with a slice of lemon or lime.
  - Become an expert at making tasty, unusual nonalcoholic drinks, like smoothies or "virgin" drinks. (For example, a "Virgin" Mary is a Bloody Mary without the alcohol.)

- **Water is your friend.**
  - Have a large glass of ice water along with every drink. Use the water to quench your thirst. Use the alcoholic drink to please your taste buds.
  - Drink a large glass of water between drinks.
- **Do the math.**
  - Figure out how much you're spending on alcohol each month. How much is that a year? What might you do with the money you save by cutting back?
  - Figure out how many calories are in each drink. How many calories is that a day or a week? Cutting back on alcohol will save you lots of calories.

©2007-2020 Healthwise, Incorporated. Healthwise disclaims any liability for use of this information, which does not replace medical advice. Current as of: August 22, 2019 • LHP2012101-0427

