

Position Statement

Alcohol

The Canadian Liver Foundation supports the level of alcohol consumption proposed in Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines:

- 10 drinks a week for women with no more than 2 drinks a day;
- 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks a day.

The Canadian Liver Foundation also recommends that the following people should avoid alcohol completely:

- People with liver disease, as determined by a doctor
- People taking medication – prescription or over-the-counter
- Pregnant women or nursing mothers

Alcohol consumption is very much part of everyday life. There are health benefits to alcohol consumption, but there are also health hazards to excessive alcohol consumption. One drink of alcohol a day decreases the risk of heart disease. However, more than 3 drinks a day for men or 2 drinks a day for women increases the risk of liver disease. Differences in the way alcohol is metabolized by the body are influenced by factors such as age, gender, body weight and genetic factors. People with impaired liver function due to many different causes of liver disease are at higher risk of additional damage due to alcohol. Therefore there is no reliable way to determine how much alcohol is 'safe' for an individual.

Alcohol can also interact with medications, particularly acetaminophen, to cause serious and even fatal liver injury.

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