HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Staying healthy with HIV can be tough. Too much alcohol can make it tougher. What’s too much? Talk to your provider.
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Lots of people drink alcohol. The effect it has on the human body differs from person to person and depends on how much and how often we drink. Some people can drink a lot and have no problems, while others can drink small amounts and end up with big consequences.

Any amount of alcohol can cloud our judgment and lead us to make decisions that negatively impact our lives. Car accidents, unprotected sex and showing up to appointments late or hung-over are just a few examples. In large amounts, alcohol can weaken our immune systems, damage our livers, and lead to serious illnesses, including heart and kidney failure.

People who have HIV and drink too much alcohol can have a hard time staying healthy. They can have lower CD4 counts; the lower one’s CD4 count, the harder it is for one’s body to fight off infections. People taking HIV medications can forget to take their pills, and not taking these medications as prescribed can make them stop working. And if you have hepatitis C or other liver problems, the use of alcohol can make your condition worse, even life-threatening.

If alcohol is a part of your life, talk to your medical provider or case manager. Know how much is too much.

Public Health
Seattle & King County

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