Cutting Back or Quitting Alcohol Use

For some people, drinking to excess may be a rare occurrence. For others, it happens frequently. A recent survey found that 33% of college students reported binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks on one occasion) at least once in the last month. An estimated one in six adults binge drinks, with 25% of them reporting that they do so weekly.

While misuse of alcohol has always been a concern, the number of people who reported drinking more or binge drinking increased during the pandemic. Researchers predict that this will result in an increased number of alcohol-related illnesses in the coming years. Other signs of problem alcohol use include:

- Personality changes, such unusual or uninhibited behavior
- Changes in appearance or decline in hygiene
- Social changes, such as isolating from others or only wanting to engage in activities that involve drinking
- Decline in work performance, including being late, missing deadlines, or lower productivity
- Physical changes, such as hangovers or alcohol withdrawal
- Drinking to the point of intoxication or blacking out
- Neglecting personal or professional obligations

Some people who have been drinking more than usual may want to cut back to a moderate drinking level (defined as one drink per day for women and two per day for men). Others may benefit from quitting drinking.

If you are concerned that you are drinking too much, or if alcohol consumption is having an impact on your health or ability to function in your daily life, these steps may help:

- Talk to your doctor about your alcohol use or seek professional assistance from LifeMatters.
- Be honest with friends about your desire to decrease your alcohol consumption. Spend time with people who will support you in your efforts to drink less or quit for good.
- Focus on activities that do not involve alcohol. Take a long drive, go for a hike, or spend time with friends in places that do not serve alcohol.

It’s important to provide support to friends or loved ones who are decreasing their alcohol use. Never pressure someone to drink alcohol.

LifeMatters is available to assist with alcohol-related concerns 24/7/365. Call anytime.

Call LifeMatters® by Empathia toll-free anytime. 1-800-367-7474

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