

Alcohol as you get older

Information for persons aged 60+



← Medications as you get older

2.004.04 ENG

Low-risk drinking habits – what does that mean?

Fact	Recommendation
As you get older, your metabolism and the proportion of water and fat in your body change. Your body is therefore more sensitive to alcohol.	The best thing is to drink alcohol with more care. Be mindful of how alcohol affects you. → If the same amount of alcohol has a stronger effect on you than before, reduce your consumption. → If, on the other hand, you drink a lot of alcohol and hardly notice any difference, think about the following: tolerating alcohol “well” can be a sign of dependency.
You are experiencing a lot of changes, e.g. your children leaving home, retirement, deaths of loved ones, and often even a decrease in your own capabilities. The effects of alcohol could be tempting.	When you are experiencing a difficult life situation, try not to turn to alcohol. If you drink to make yourself feel better, you increase the risk of becoming dependent. You can find support from friends and family or professionals.
As you get older, you are more likely to develop diseases that require medication. Drinking alcohol as well can cause interactions.	If you are taking medications, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions with alcohol.

The following recommendations apply to healthy adults to protect their health:

- **Men: no more than two glasses of alcohol per day**
- **Women: no more than one glass of alcohol per day**
- **For men and women: have at least two days a week without drinking any alcohol.**

On special occasions, when alcohol is more readily available: don't drink more than four glasses.



If you are concerned about your alcohol consumption ...

... talk to a specialist organisation for alcohol problems, your doctor or another healthcare professional without delay (addresses can be found under suchtindex.ch/indexaddictions.ch).

You can also contact Addiction Switzerland at any time if you have questions or are looking for addresses of specialist organisations in your region: Phone 0800 104 104 (German), Phone 0800 105 105 (French).

Online advice is available at safezone.ch – anonymously and free of charge (DEU, FRA, ITA).

Further information

Leaflets

“Alcohol and medications as you get older. Information for persons aged 60+ and their loved ones” (DEU, FRA, ITA) (Addiction Switzerland and ZFPS). Order or download the leaflet at: shop.suchtschweiz.ch/shop.addictionsuisse.ch

“Did you sleep well?” (DEU) and “Sleeping pills and sedatives: Avoid dependence” (15 languages) are available to download at: suchtpraevention-zh.ch (*Publikationen > Informationsmaterial > Für alle Zielgruppen*)

Websites

alterundsucht.ch (DEU)
addictions-et-vieillessement.ch (FRA)
dipendenze-e-invecchiamento.ch (ITA)
suchtimalter.ch (DEU)

suchtschweiz.ch/aeltere-personen (DEU)
addictionsuisse.ch/personnes-agees (FRA)

prosenectute.ch: Information and advice for general questions on getting older (DEU, FRA, ITA)

migesplus.ch: Health information in various languages

migraweb.ch: Living in Switzerland – Information and counselling online (18 languages)

Publication:

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Medications as you get older

Information for persons aged 60+



Alcohol as you get older

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What should you be mindful of when taking medications?

Fact	Recommendation
<p>More health problems and diseases develop with age, such as high blood pressure or heart disease.</p> <p>People therefore often take more medications in the second half of their life.</p>	<p>Taking medications is necessary and worthwhile for many health problems. Discuss the following with your doctor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there other treatment options available? Do your medications have interactions with other medicines or alcohol? What are the risks of taking the medications? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a risk of dependency? Can you still drive a vehicle? <p>→ If you are unsure, have a chat with your doctor or a medication check with your pharmacist.</p>
<p>As you get older, your sleep behaviour can change.</p> <p>Sleep problems can occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing sleep patterns, e.g. waking up more often or lying awake for longer, can be a normal sign of ageing. Only take medications for this in exceptional cases and, if possible, only for a short period of time. Many sleeping pills can make you dependent on them. Relatively simple changes in behaviour can often help with sleep problems. For example, avoiding heavy meals and alcohol in the evening can help. Relaxation techniques or herbal remedies, such as bedtime teas, can also help. <p>→ Before you take any medications, find out about alternatives and talk to your doctor.</p> <p>→ Sleeping pills and sedatives from the class of benzodiazepines (e.g. Dormicum®) and Z-drugs (e.g. Stilnox®) should only be taken for a short period.</p>
<p>Ageing can bring various different problems with it: finding retirement difficult, loss of loved ones, increased pain, and many more. These can affect mental health and cause sleep problems.</p> <p>Talking to friends and family or with professionals can help relieve the burden. However, medications may also be appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychopharmaceuticals (e.g. antidepressants) can help in certain situations. However, you need to be very careful with some medications: certain sleeping pills and sedatives can quickly make you dependent on them. They can also have an adverse effect on memory and increase the risk of falls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the pros and cons of taking medication with your doctor. What are the arguments for taking medication, what are the arguments against? Are there other options too that may help? <p>→ Take your medications exactly as instructed by your doctor.</p>

If you have questions about your medication consumption ...

... talk to a doctor and/or pharmacist without delay. If you have questions about a possible medication dependency, you can also contact specialist organisations for dependency/addiction-related matters in your region (addresses are available at suchtindex.ch/indexaddictions.ch).

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 Phone 0800 104 104 (German),
 Phone 0800 105 105 (French).

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More information can be found on the back of this leaflet.



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