

# 4 Things You Should Know About Alcohol



When making a choice about whether to drink alcohol, consider its impact on your health:

**1 Alcohol increases your blood pressure and heart rate—but slows brain activity.** This can negatively affect a person's:

- Ability to think and remember clearly
- Behavior and eating habits
- Coordination (potentially causing unsteadiness)
- Mood (irritability and sadness)

**2 Our bodies react differently to alcohol as we age.** You may feel more effects from a drink now than before. And drinking too much alcohol over a long period of time could lead to:

- Liver damage
- Some kinds of cancer
- Immune system disorders
- Brain damage

**3 Drinking alcohol can affect your sleep.** You may notice that alcohol has sedative effects that can induce feelings of relaxation and sleepiness, but the consumption of alcohol—especially in excess—has been linked to poor sleep quality and duration.

**4 Some health conditions and many medications make it unsafe to drink alcohol.** This includes certain drugs used to treat arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, as well as allergies, colds, and heartburn. Talk with your healthcare provider about what is appropriate for you.