



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE

## ALCOHOL MISUSE MINIMIZES READINESS



**CHALLENGE** your Service members and yourself to adopt at least one of the recommended resources to prevent alcohol misuse.

### STANDARD DRINK SIZES

Drinks come in various sizes because of the different amount of alcohol in each. Be aware that one drink you order at a bar or make at home could be equal to two or three standard drinks:



12 oz of beer  
= 5% alcohol



8 oz of malt liquor  
= 7% alcohol



5 oz of wine  
= 12% alcohol



1.5 oz of  
80-proof liquor  
= 40% alcohol

### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol tolerance varies from person to person. Factors like height, weight, and gender play a part. Excessive alcohol use, defined as binge or heavy drinking, is harmful to overall health and can increase the risk of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). On average:

- Binge drinking is five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women, in a two-hour period.
- Heavy drinking is 15 or more drinks for men and eight or more drinks for women, per week.

AUD is a medical diagnosis due to the inability to control alcohol use despite the consequences. While not all binge and heavy drinkers will develop AUD, they are at greater risk.

### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



#### MYTH

1. Liquor gets you drunk faster than beer or wine
2. Coffee sobers you up
3. Alcohol helps you sleep



#### TRUTH

1. It's not the type of drink, it's the amount of alcohol in each drink
2. It takes time to metabolize alcohol, caffeine can't speed up the process
3. It decreases the quality and duration of sleep

### CONTACT US

For more information on alcohol or other wellness topics, email us at: [ng.ncr.nqb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.nqb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil)

### YOU CALL THE SHOTS

Connecting with family and friends is critical to your well-being. However, many social situations include alcohol. What if you want to cut back or cut out drinking? How can you maintain your connections, but stay in control? Remember, you call the shots. Check out these strategies for socializing on your terms.<sup>2,3</sup> If one doesn't work, try something else.

- **Set limits.** Plan how many days a week you want to drink and how many drinks you want to have. Schedule in alcohol-free days.
- **Count drinks.** Know what a "standard" drink is and keep track of how many you have. Mix in non-alcoholic options, like water or soda.
- **Manage triggers.** Avoid situations that tempt you to drink more. Engage in non-drinking activities, like going to a movie with friends.
- **Say no.** It's ok to pass on a drink. Confidently decline the offer with a simple response like, "No thanks, I'm good with water."
- **Walk away.** Give yourself permission to exit a situation if you feel uncomfortable.
- **Find support.** Ask someone you trust, like a battle buddy or wingman, to support you.



## UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBLE DRINKING

### What does it mean?

- Everyone processes alcohol differently, but drinking in moderation typically means two drinks or less for men and one drink or less for women, a day.<sup>1</sup>

### Why does it matter?

- Alcohol affects your ability to make decisions and stay in control. It can increase stress and decrease performance, which reduces readiness.

### What can you do?

- If you're going to drink, have a plan, count your drinks, know your limit, and stick to it.
- Don't drink and drive. Use a designated driver or call a car share service.
- If you're not going to drink, be assertive and clearly decline any offers.
- Pay attention to how alcohol impacts you. If you feel out of control, ask for help.
- Create relationships and social interactions that focus on non-drinking activities.
- Recommend a support group to friends and family members needing help and hope.
- Protect yourself and others by safely storing firearms in the home to make access to lethal means more difficult in times of crisis.

# AVALON

ACTION ALLIANCE

The National Guard recently partnered with Avalon Action Alliance (AAA) to increase access to care for National Guard members.

AAA offers tailored support for those dealing with alcohol and other substance misuse, to help them regain their well-being and sense of purpose. Learn more at: <https://www.avalonactionalliance.org>



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Contact your Chaplain, Military and Family Life Counselor, Director of Psychological Health, Behavioral Health Officer, or chain of command for support and a referral to resources in the community.



Military OneSource helps Service members, and their families address alcohol misuse with resources, support, and counseling via phone, online chat, or video. [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration includes prevention, treatment, and recovery support. [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)



Department of Veterans Affairs' screening tool offers a confidential and anonymous way to get instant feedback on your alcohol use. [www.myhealth.va.gov/web/myhealthvet/alcohol-use-screening](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/web/myhealthvet/alcohol-use-screening)



National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has resources, evidence-based products, and screenings available. [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)



Alcoholics Anonymous offers free support groups to help people achieve sobriety. [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)



Al-Anon Family Groups provides support to people who are worried about a friend or family member with a drinking problem. [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)



## SPOTLIGHT: OWN YOUR LIMITS

- DoD's education campaign is a one-stop shop for resources and support for Service members wanting to learn more about responsible drinking.
- There is a drinking habits quiz, a calculator to help you make better decisions, and other actionable tips like ways to cut alcohol from your social media feed.
- Learn more at: [www.ownyourlimits.org](http://www.ownyourlimits.org).



### REFERENCES:

1. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/drinklessbeyourbest/drinkingless.html>
3. CHAMP Uniformed Services University <https://www.hprc-online.org/social-fitness/relationship-building/sticking-no-staying-sober-social-situations>