



one drug | different patterns of use | different risks

1. Risk to long-term health indicated by total units of alcohol (or “standard drinks”) consumed in a typical week (Q1)				
	Age 13-15	Age 16-18	Age 19-24	Age 25+
Low risk	0 units	less than 5 units	less than 16 units	less than 16 units
Increased risk	1-4 units	5-15 units	16-30 units	16-30 units
High risk	more than 4 units	more than 15 units	more than 30 units	more than 30 units
2. Risk for immediate harms indicated by level of alcohol impairment (Q1) and use in inappropriate contexts (Q2)				
	Age 13-15	Age 16-18	Age 19-24	Age 25+
Low risk	no alcohol use	never more than 2 units and no inappropriate use	never more than 3 units and no inappropriate use	never more than 4 units and no inappropriate use
Increased risk	any days with 1 unit and no inappropriate use	1 or 2 days with 3 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use	1 day with 4-5 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use	1 day with 5-7 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use
High risk	any days more than 1 unit or any inappropriate use	more than 2 days 3 units or any days more than 3 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use	more than 1 day 4-5 units or any days more than 5 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use	more than 1 day 5-7 units or any days more than 7 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use
3. Risk of developing unhealthy habitual use or dependence indicated by daily use (Q1) or difficulty in stopping (Q3)				
	Age 13-15	Age 16-18	Age 19-24	Age 25+
Low risk	use 1 day at most and no difficulty stopping	use 2 days at most and no difficulty stopping	at least 1 day alcohol-free and no difficulty stopping	at least 1 day alcohol-free and no difficulty stopping
Increased risk	use on more than 1 day and/or any difficulty stopping	use on more than 2 days and/or any difficulty stopping	no days alcohol-free and/or any difficulty stopping	no days alcohol-free and/or any difficulty stopping

* The research evidence demonstrates different physical impacts of alcohol related to male and female body types. These relate to biological not gender differences. In order to receive the most appropriate guidance, it is important to use the category (male/female) that best fits your current biological body type.

“The opposite of addiction is intention.”

(Stanton Peele, *Recover!* 2014)

All alcohol use involves some risk. By reflecting on your pattern of use in light of the information provided here, you can manage your risk for immediate injury or death, your chances for long-term health consequences such as cancer or heart disease, and your risk of developing habitual patterns of drinking that may lead to these harms.

It’s your life! You’re in charge!

For more information see www.alcoholreality.ca

Overall drinking pattern

indicated by the combination of above scores

Low risk pattern	Low risk on all 3
Increased risk pattern	Low risk on any 2 but Increased risk on the other
High risk pattern	Increased risk on 2 or more or High risk on 1 or more





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	Age 13-15	Age 16-18	Age 19-24	Age 25+
Low risk	0 units	less than 5 units	less than 11 units	less than 11 units
Increased risk	1-4 units	5-10 units	11-20 units	11-20 units
High risk	more than 4 units	more than 10 units	more than 20 units	more than 20 units
2. Risk for immediate harms indicated by level of alcohol impairment (Q1) and use in inappropriate contexts (Q2)				
	Age 13-15	Age 16-18	Age 19-24	Age 25+
Low risk	no alcohol use	never more than 2 units and no inappropriate use	never more than 2 units and no inappropriate use	never more than 3 units and no inappropriate use
Increased risk	any days with 1 unit and no inappropriate use	1 or 2 days with 3 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use	1 day with 3-4 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use	1 day with 4 units and/or 1 time inappropriate use
High risk	any days more than 1 unit or any inappropriate use	more than 2 days 3 units or any days more than 3 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use	more than 1 day 3-4 units or any days more than 4 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use	more than 1 day 4 units or any days more than 4 units or more than 1 time of inappropriate use
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