

ALCOHOL and the IMMUNE SYSTEM: 4 Things You Should Know



Drinking alcohol can affect the immune system and your health, which may worsen symptoms of COVID-19.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



1. Alcohol consumption contributes to a wide range of health problems and can weaken the body's immune system.



3. Chronic high-risk alcohol use can weaken lung immune responses and increases the risk of developing respiratory illnesses, such as pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome.



2. High-risk alcohol use* reduces the body's ability to fight off illnesses.



4. Alcohol use does not stimulate the immune system or increase resistance to illness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid or reduce alcohol consumption. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to become pregnant, the safest choice is to not drink alcohol and follow **public health advice for pregnancy, childbirth and caring for newborns**.
- Follow **Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines**. These guidelines contain suggestions for lowering risks associated with the use of alcohol.
- Use **Knowing Your Limits with Alcohol: A Practical Guide to Assessing Your Drinking** to reflect on your relationship with alcohol.
- If you are seeking support for substance use, visit <https://www.ccsa.ca/addictions-treatment-helplines-canada> and **Wellness Together Canada**.

For more information on alcohol and the immune system,
see **COVID-19, Alcohol and Cannabis Use**.

* High-risk alcohol use defined as drinking more than 3 drinks for women or 4 drinks for men on any single occasion, and more than 10 drinks per week for women and 15 drinks per week for men.



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

For more information visit

www.ccsa.ca