

## 10 Tips For Reducing Alcohol Consumption

Maybe you are thinking it is time to cut back a bit on your alcohol consumption or perhaps your SBIRT screening has put you into the “risky” drinking category. Whatever the reason here are a few tips to help you reduce your consumption:

- 1 If you are really thirsty, have a glass of water, juice or other liquids BEFORE having your first drink.
- 2 Sip your drink and eat something while consuming alcohol. Slows down the consumption of alcohol and lets your body absorb the alcohol slowly.
- 3 Space your drinks – have a glass of water in between drinks. The water will help to prevent dehydration (which causes hangovers) as well as fill you up so you are less likely to drink as much.
- 4 Count your drinks so that you know just how many you have consumed. Use your phone to track this or find other clever ways to track your drinking.
- 5 If you are a daily drinker, try having a drink every other day – or create a day, or two or three each week that are “alcohol free” days. Create activities with others where drinking is not involved on these days and keep other beverages close at hand.
- 6 Try drinking alcohol free beer and wine. Although both contain a small amount of alcohol it is much less than what you are probably used to drinking. Both provide the taste but not the alcohol and can be a great way to reduce your alcohol intake.
- 7 Don’t get another beer or refill your glass until it is empty. It is easy to lose track of how many drinks you have had if you or someone else keeps refilling your glass or handing you another beer before you have completely finished the one in front of you.
- 8 When stressed or emotionally upset it may be easy to turn to alcohol but BEFORE you get that beer, glass of wine, or other alcoholic beverage, try to find other coping strategies – exercise, call a friend, do yoga, listen to music, write, whatever you find comforting or soothing. After you spend time in an alternative activity you may find you don’t even want a drink.
- 9 Get support. When trying to change any behavior it helps to have encouragement and support so let someone you know and trust in on your plan to change your drinking behavior and ask for his/her support. Anyone who really cares about you will want to support your efforts.
- 10 Make your own drinks and/or pour your own glass of wine or beer. A standard drink is 1 ½ ounces of hard liquor, 5 ounces of wine and 8 ounces of beer. If someone else is making your drink or getting your drink (other than a bartender), he/she might give you a bit more than a standard drink. Better to pour or make your own to assure that you stay on track as you attempt to drink responsibly.