

## Introducing Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health

**December 5, 2023 - For immediate release**

Supported by Health Canada, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction updated and replaced Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines with the current *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health*. Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy (TDAS) and Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is raising public awareness to reduce the harms related to alcohol use.

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health, replaces Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guideline with updated information about risks associated with consuming alcohol:

- 0 drinks per week — Not drinking has benefits, such as better overall health and better sleep.
- 2 standard drinks or less per week — Low risk: you are likely to avoid alcohol-related consequences for yourself or others at this level.
- 3–6 standard drinks per week — Moderate risk: your risk of developing several types of cancer, including breast and colon cancer increases at this level.
- 7 standard drinks or more per week — High risk: in addition to cancer risks, your risk of heart disease or stroke increases significantly at this level.

According to Public Health Ontario, **27.9%** of residents in the THU catchment area reported having consumed three or more standard drinks within seven days. This means nearly one third of the population falls under the **MODERATE RISK** category in the new guidelines. It is also worth noting that **17.3%** of the residents in the THU area versus 16.0% of Ontario residents reported engaging in heavy drinking on at least one occasion within a month (Public Health Ontario, 2023).

"Negative health effects of alcohol start as low as 3 drinks per week. The new guidance has made this very clear: no matter how much you currently drink, less alcohol is better." Said Dr. Glenn Corneil, THU's Acting Medical Officer of Health.

THU and TDAS would like to remind the public:

- Each additional standard drink increases the risk of alcohol-related consequences.
- Consuming more than 2 standard drinks per occasion is associated with an increased risk of harms to self and others, including injuries and violence.
- Youth under the legal drinking age should delay drinking for as long as possible.
- When breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is safest. If you choose to drink while breastfeeding, visit this resource to learn how to reduce your risk:  
<https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/A28-F.pdf>

TDAS is a cross-sectoral collaboration led by THU to address substance use related harms in the district. For more information on local services, such as counselling, 12 steps groups, harm reduction, peer support, and social services please visit the resource section on TDAS website:  
<https://tdas.ca/resources/>

For more details about the Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health, please visit  
<https://drinklesslivemore.ca/>

Public Health Ontario (2023). Alcohol use snapshot PHU/LHIN 92015 to 2020). Accessed from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Substance-Use/Alcohol-Use>

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