



December 2021 Newsletter

A toast to mindful drinking this holiday season!

The holidays can put people in situations where they might drink more alcohol than other times of the year. Some may be inclined to overdo it to cope with the stress of a family gathering, or a socially awkward office function. Holiday expectations can be unrealistically high, and some may overindulge as a coping mechanism.

An approach to alcohol consumption, known as "mindful drinking," has gained popularity over the last few years. By making a conscious decision about whether they want to have a drink, many people have found themselves drinking less and feeling better about their choices. Mindful drinking is meant to disrupt behaviors that one might be doing without thinking.

This mindful approach to drinking is becoming more popular as people assess the patterns they may have fallen into during the pandemic. As lockdowns dragged on, some people realized that their relationship with alcohol had started moving into dangerous territory. While new healthy habits might have helped alleviate stress and boredom; other, less positive behaviors may have crept in as well.

Younger adults are inclined to drink less than previous generations did at their age and more likely to be mindful about their consumption of alcohol. Some may be inclined to drink sometimes, but not always. Similar to temperance movements of the past, the mindful drinking movement embraces moderation. The current incarnation seems to be less about being a teetotaler and more about making real-time decisions about when, where and what to drink.

Beverage companies have noticed the desire for more low- and no-alcohol drinks. Alcohol-free wines, beers and spirits are becoming more available. Low alcohol versions of wine and beer can be found. Some drinks have other attributes seen as "healthy" like low-carbs and zero sugar.



During the holidays, alcohol can be everywhere. One strategy is to make a plan about how much you intend to drink and what you are going to say if someone tries to encourage you to go beyond your limit. Low-risk drinking is defined by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) as no more than 3

drinks on one day or 7 in a week for women, and for men, 4 on one day and 14 in a week. Moderate drinking is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and two for men. This reflects the fact that alcohol has a harsher impact on a woman's body than a man's body. (See CDC article in Sources.)

Party hosts and licensed establishments can help by providing a variety of low- and non-alcoholic drinks, including lots of water, and food to help absorb alcohol.

Other outlets for stress like taking a walk, doing yoga or some other relaxing activity can be helpful. And holidays don't have to be perfect. For every beautifully wrapped present and perfect looking sugar cookie on the internet, there is a Pinterest fail posted online somewhere that might make you laugh—the best medicine.

Sources:

[The Truth About Holiday Spirits](#), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, November 2021

[Why More American Are Becoming Sober Curious](#), SmartBrief, October 18, 2021

[Alcohol Consumption during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-Sectional Survey of US Adults](#), Elyse R. Grossman, Sara E. Benjamin-Neelon, Susan Sonnenschein, December 2020

[Drinking Patterns and Their Definitions](#), Alcohol Research: Current Reviews, National Institutes of Health, January 2018

[Excessive Alcohol Use is a Risk to Women's Health](#), CDC, October 2020

[How to manage when, if or how much you'll drink this holiday season](#), NPR, December 2021

[20 Hilarious Pinterest Fails](#), Bored Panda