

April 2013

## April: Alcohol Awareness Month Alcoholism and Family History

If you have a parent, grandparent, or other close relative with alcoholism, you may have problems with alcohol down the road. Many studies of children of alcoholics have found that they are about four times more likely to develop alcohol problems than people without a family history of alcoholism, says the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

But alcoholism isn't determined only by the genes you inherit. In fact, more than half of all children of alcoholics don't become alcoholics. Many factors influence your risk of developing alcoholism. These include how your parents raised you, your friends, your stress level, and how available alcohol is to you. Knowing that you're at risk is important, though, because you can take steps to protect yourself.

### Certain Symptoms

- Craving. A strong need or urge to drink.
- Loss of control. Not being able to stop drinking or to control the results once drinking starts.
- Physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety, are experienced when you stop drinking
- Tolerance. The need to drink greater amounts of alcohol over time.

If you're worried that your family's history of alcohol problems or your troubled family life puts you at risk of becoming alcoholic, here are some steps from the NIAAA to help prevent it:

### What to do

- **Avoid underage drinking.** The risk for alcoholism is higher if you begin to drink at an early age. This is because of social factors and genes.
- **Drink moderately as an adult.** If you have a family history of alcoholism, you are at greater risk of becoming dependent on alcohol. You should approach even moderate drinking with caution because you may find it difficult to stay at that level.

If you or your family has problems with alcohol and you're concerned you may be heading that way as well, talk with your health care provider and substance-abuse counselor. They can recommend support groups or helpful organizations, or even treatment if needed.

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## Featured Website on Alcohol Information

The **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism** offers a wealth of information about how alcohol use affects human health. For example, learn how alcohol affects different groups and people with certain disorders. Also, better understand what binge drinking is and how much alcohol is found in a standard drink. Copy and paste the link below to learn more!



Source: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>

## Facing Up to Alcohol in the Workplace

Alcoholism is often called a family disease because it affects the family as well as the individual with alcoholism. However, alcoholism is also a workplace disease.

### Costly and dangerous

Employees who are dependent on alcohol have higher health care costs than the average worker. In addition, workers who drink on the job or heavily after work may take chances that may affect the safety, productivity, and morale of coworkers.

Frequent absences, especially on Mondays, is one sign of alcohol problems at work. Recurrent lateness on any day is another. Other signs include poor quality of work, more errors in judgment, poor concentration, and missed deadlines.

### Steps to take

When faced with working with someone who drinks too much, many people choose to do nothing. Ignoring the problem doesn't do the person any good. People who are dependent on alcohol rarely get help on their own. They are more likely to get treatment when pressured by family members, the courts, or their bosses. With this in mind, consider taking these two steps:

Talk with the person at your company assigned to handle problems like this. It might be someone with your employee assistance program or a medical person.

Talk with your coworker when he or she is sober. Express your concern in a caring way. Be sure to use "I" phrases, such as "I think," "I feel," and "I'm worried." Focus on the problematic behavior and its effect on the person's own career.

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### Social Drinking versus Problem Drinking

Some people can drink liquor for hours on end and appear to stay sober, while others become tipsy after just one drink. So how can you tell if you or someone else is a problem drinker?

People who have alcohol dependence can't always predict how much they will drink, when they will stop, or what they will do while drinking. And it is common for alcoholics to deny the negative effects of drinking or that they even have a problem.

#### The effects of alcohol

Alcohol can lessen tension, reduce inhibitions, and ease social interaction. When used in excess, however, it can be physically and psychologically addicting; cause impaired memory, coordination, and judgment; damage the heart, liver, and nervous system; and lead to birth defects. The abuser also places himself or herself and others at risk if he or she drives or operates machinery after drinking too much. Alcohol abuse and dependence can start at any age, and there are no good predictors of when it may start, though a family history or current family alcohol or drug abuse problems may influence the start of personal drinking problems.

#### Safe drinking

If you drink alcohol, take these steps to minimize risks:

- Eat 15 minutes before drinking to help slow the alcohol's absorption and slow its effects.
- Don't drink when you are thirsty.
- Don't drink when you are under stress/emotional upset

#### Signs of problem drinking

If you suspect someone has alcohol dependence, look for these symptoms:

- Frequent uncontrolled drinking episodes
- Excessive drinking to the point of intoxication
- Going to work drunk or drinking on the job
- Driving while drunk

#### What you can do

- Learn more facts about alcoholism through state and local councils on alcoholism, libraries, local hospitals, and religious groups.
- Treat alcoholism as a disease, not a moral failure or lack of willpower.
- Don't become an "enabler" by protecting or lying for an alcoholic, or denying the problem exists.
- Encourage treatment; your health care provider can help find treatment resources.
- Respect the recovered alcoholic's choice to avoid alcohol.

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### Can drinking problems begin later in life?

How do you talk to an older person about his or her drinking? Get answers to this and other questions from *Older Adults and Alcohol: You Can Get Help*, a free booklet from the National Institute of Health.

This 18-page publication is filled with personal stories, checklists, Questions and Answers, practical tips and resources. Learn how alcohol interacts with medications, how heavy drinking affects health and how family, friends and caregivers might help if they're concerned about someone's drinking.

To download or order free copies of *Older Adults and Alcohol*, visit the link below.

Source: <http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/older-adults-and-alcohol>

### Healthy Recipe: Teriyaki-Glazed Salmon With Stir-Fried Vegetables

#### Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp light teriyaki sauce
- ¼ C mirin (or sweet rice wine)
- 2 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 Tbsp scallions (green onions), rinsed and minced
- 1½ Tbsp ginger, minced (or 1 tsp ground)
- 12 oz salmon fillets, cut into 4 portions (3 oz each)
- For Vegetables:** bag (12 oz) frozen vegetable stir-fry
- ½ Tbsp peanut oil or vegetable oil
- ½ Tbsp garlic, minced (about 1 clove)
- 1 Tbsp ginger, minced (or 1 teaspoon ground)
- 1 Tbsp scallions (green onions), rinsed and minced
- 1 Tbsp light soy sauce

#### Instructions:

Thaw frozen vegetables in the microwave (or place entire bag in a bowl of hot water for about 10 minutes). Set aside until you add to dish. Preheat oven to 350 °F. Combine teriyaki sauce, mirin, rice vinegar, scallions, and ginger. Mix well. Pour over salmon, and marinate for 10–15 minutes. Remove salmon from the marinade, and discard unused portion. Place salmon on a baking sheet, and bake for 10–15 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork in the thickest part (minimum internal temperature of 145 F). Meanwhile, heat oil in a large wok or sauté pan. Add garlic, ginger, and scallions, and cook gently but do not brown, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add veggies, and continue to stir fry for 2–3 minutes or until heated through. Add soy sauce.

**Serving Size:** 3 oz salmon, 1 C vegetables. **Yields:** 4 servings.

#### Nutrition/Amount Per Serving

Calories 253	Total Fat 11g	Cholesterol 50 mg
Sodium 202 mg	Carbs. 16 g	Fiber 3g
Protein 24g		

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
<http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/healthyating/recipe/detail.aspx?linkId=11&cId=3&rId=23>