



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Abuse

Centre canadien de lutte contre  
l'alcoolisme et les toxicomanies

## Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines introduced to Canadians

**Ottawa, November 25, 2011** – The first pan-Canadian low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines—developed to help Canadians make informed choices about alcohol consumption and to encourage a culture of moderation—were officially released today.

Developed by the [National Alcohol Strategy Advisory Committee](#) (NASAC), [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) are an important tool to reduce Canadians' risk of alcohol-related harms, which cost Canada \$14.6 billion each year according to a 2002 study from the [Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse](#).

At a recent meeting, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers discussed Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines as the best available advice to Canadians for low-risk drinking, and will promote the use of the Guidelines within their jurisdictions as appropriate. These Guidelines will help enable health professionals across Canada to provide consistent evidence-based advice on drinking and health to their patients.

Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines form an essential component of Canada's National Alcohol Strategy.

"Canada's National Alcohol Strategy underscores the need to develop a culture of moderation," says Michel Perron, NASAC Co-Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. "I'm delighted that we're now able to give Canadians one consistent set of guidelines to help them make informed decisions about drinking alcohol."

To reduce long-term health risks, the Guidelines recommend no more than two drinks a day or 10 drinks a week for women, and no more than three drinks a day or 15 drinks a week for men, balanced with non-drinking days. The Guidelines also suggest limits to reduce harm on single occasions, and highlight situations where alcohol should be avoided altogether, such as when taking medication or driving.

[Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) are informed by the most recent and best available scientific research. They have received the support of many respected national and regional Canadian organizations, including: Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Paediatric Society, Canadian Public Health Association, Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, College of Family Physicians of Canada, Educ'alcool, MADD Canada, and Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.

"MADD Canada strongly supports Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines because they will teach Canadians how to consume alcohol in moderation, and reduce alcohol-related dangers such as impaired driving," says Andrew Murie, NASAC Co-Chair and Chief Executive Officer of MADD Canada.

"The Guidelines are an important step in providing Canadians with information about less harmful drinking behaviours to help minimize short- and long-term health risks," says Carolyn Davison, NASAC Co-Chair and

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Director of Addiction Services at the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. “They can be used by primary health care providers who conduct screening, brief intervention and referrals. They will also be used to shape program and policy planning, and to give researchers a consistent way to measure overdrinking.”

For more information on Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines and related reports, visit [www.ccsa.ca/eng/priorities/alcohol/canada-low-risk-alcohol-drinking-guidelines](http://www.ccsa.ca/eng/priorities/alcohol/canada-low-risk-alcohol-drinking-guidelines).

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**About CCSA:**

With a legislated mandate to reduce alcohol- and other drug-related harms, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) provides leadership on national priorities, fosters knowledge translation within the field, and creates sustainable partnerships that maximize collective efforts. CCSA receives funding support from Health Canada.

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