ALCOHOL and the IMMUNE SYSTEM: 4 Things You Should Know





Drinking alcohol can affect the immune system and your health, which may worsen symptoms of COVID-19.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



 Alcohol consumption contributes to a wide range of health problems and can weaken the body's immune system.



 Chronic high-risk alcohol use can weaken lung immune responses and increases the risk of developing respiratory illnesses, such as pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome.



2. High-risk alcohol use* reduces the body's ability to fight off illnesses.



4. Alcohol use does not stimulate the immune system or increase resistance to illness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid or reduce alcohol consumption. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to become pregnant, the safest choice is to not drink alcohol and follow **public health advice for pregnancy, childbirth and caring for newborns**.
- Follow Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines. These guidelines contain suggestions for lowering risks associated with the use of alcohol.
- Use Knowing Your Limits with Alcohol: A Practical Guide to Assessing Your Drinking to reflect on your relationship with alcohol.
- If you are seeking support for substance use, visit https://www.ccsa.ca/addictions-treatment-helplines-canada and Wellness Together Canada.

For more information on alcohol and the immune system, see *COVID-19*, *Alcohol and Cannabis Use*.

* High-risk alcohol use defined as drinking more than 3 drinks for women or 4 drinks for men on any single occasion, and more than 10 drinks per week for women and 15 drinks per week for men.

