



If you are dealing with stress or anxiety related to COVID-19, this is completely normal. Know that everyone deals with these feelings in unique ways. As always, it is important to consider coping strategies that will manage your stress in a positive manner. Seek help if you cannot manage on your own.

In response to the stress, boredom or alternate working arrangements caused by COVID-19, more individuals are turning to alcohol and other substances as a primary coping mechanism. Alcohol consumption that exceeds the [low risk drinking guidelines](#) may lead to long-term health risks. Equally dangerous are the short-term risks of drinking which may alter your thoughts, judgement, decision-making and behaviour. As such, avoid drinking while:

- driving a vehicle or other machinery
- taking medicine or other drugs that interact with alcohol
- doing any kind of dangerous physical activity
- living with mental or physical health problems
- living with alcohol dependence
- pregnant or planning to become pregnant

Alcohol may also act as a social cue that increases the use of other substances like tobacco. People tend to smoke, or smoke more, if they drink alcohol. Smoking is associated with more dangerous progression of COVID-19.

Overall, the evidence suggests that there is no “safe limit” – in fact, the risk of damage to your health increases with each drink of alcohol consumed. Under no circumstances

should you drink any type of alcoholic product as a means of preventing or treating COVID-19 infection.

Alcohol: what to do, and what not to do, during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Choose activities that do not include the use of alcohol
- Stay sober so you can make decisions with a clear head, for yourself and others in your family. If you drink, keep your drinking to a minimum and avoid getting intoxicated.
- Never mix alcohol with medications, even herbal or over-the-counter remedies.
- Do not consume alcohol if you take any medication acting on the central nervous system (e.g. painkillers, sleeping tablets, anti-depressants, etc).

There is help available to learn positive coping strategies for dealing with COVID-19. Visit the new portal "[Wellness Together Canada](#)" for access to free online courses, resources, tools, and confidential phone or chat sessions with trained professionals.

Resources

[The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Coping with Stress and Anxiety.](#)

[Call 211 Ontario for free anytime for information and referrals for community, government, social and health services, including mental health resources across Ontario, call 211 or 1-877-330-3213.](#)

In Crisis? Call the [Mental Health Crisis Line of Grey Bruce](#) at 1-877-470-5200. This line is staffed by trained volunteers, and is available to help serve people in distress or crisis. Staff are available to speak with you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of