

สัปดาห์แห่งเวชศาสตร์วิถีชีวิต 18-24 พฤษภาคม 2568

ไม่มี

ระดับการดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ใด ที่ปลอดภัย

- WHO เตือนภัยเงียบจากหยดแรก



โดย ร.อ.นพ.ยงยุทธ มัยลาภ

นายกสมาคมเวชศาสตร์วิถีชีวิต
และสุขภาพะไทย

RISKY SUBSTANCES



It is well known that tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol increases the risk of many chronic diseases and death. And the inappropriate use of mind-altering substances (drugs) can be associated with serious behavioral, cognitive, and physiological problems.

Treatments for people caught in a cycle of habitual use or exposure to risky behaviors take time, different approaches and many attempts. Patience as well as getting support from others is an important part of reaching your goals.





Effective Treatment Models

01

Mental health treatment to help resolve underlying triggers, which may include counseling (individual or support groups)

02

Medication-assisted therapies

03

Use of other lifestyle medicine pillars (decreasing stress through exercise, healthy eating, improved sleep, decreasing stress through meditation and mindfulness, and improving social relationships)

04

Combination of treatments with multiple modalities including support with medication.



Slips and relapses are normal and considered part of the change process. Goal setting, support and persistence is key!





A Note on Alcohol

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men or 1 drink or less in a day for women, on days when alcohol is consumed.

One standard alcoholic drink in US:

- 12 oz beer
- 5 oz table wine
- 1.5 oz of 80-proof spirits

Typical Containers:

- 750 mL wine = 5 drinks
- 750 mL spirits = 18 drinks
- 1 L spirits = 24 drinks





GOALS FOR AVOIDING RISKY SUBSTANCES

Setting goals around substance use (tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs) is a great way to start making changes. An example of a goal is, "I will swap my morning cigarette with chewing gum at least 5 days this week for the next four weeks. I will ask my partner to help keep me on track and use the free texting service for more support."



Specific

What would you like to decrease/change?



Measurable

How much or how many will you decrease or change?



Attainable

Will you be inspired or overwhelmed by this goal?



Realistic

Can you visualize success?



Time-connected

How often or for how long will you make this change?



The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared unequivocally that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption. Whether consumed in large or small amounts, alcohol still negatively affects the body, as it is a toxic substance that acts on the nervous system and causes addiction. It is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen, alongside asbestos, radiation, and tobacco.

Even high-quality or expensive alcoholic beverages pose health risks. Alcohol is strongly linked to at least seven types of cancer, including colorectal cancer and breast cancer.

Recent data from the WHO European Region indicate that even light to moderate alcohol consumption still carries a high risk of cancer. For example, consumption of wine up to 1.5 liters, beer up to 3.5 liters, or spirits up to 450 milliliters per week is still considered risky. This is particularly true for women, in whom alcohol-related breast cancer is most commonly observed.

WHO emphasizes that “the risk starts from the first drop,”

and currently, there is no scientific evidence that can determine a safe level of alcohol consumption.

Although some studies suggest that alcohol may have benefits for heart disease or type 2 diabetes, WHO stresses that there is no clear evidence that these potential benefits outweigh the cancer risks. These seemingly positive conclusions may stem from statistical methods or selective study populations, and may not account for other contributing factors.

The WHO European Region has the highest alcohol consumption and the highest proportion of drinkers in the world, with over 200 million people at risk of alcohol-related cancer. Vulnerable groups, such as the poor or disadvantaged populations, are often more severely affected by alcohol—even when consuming the same amount.

WHO calls for alcohol products to carry health warning labels similar to those on tobacco products, encourages healthcare professionals to discuss alcohol risks with their patients, and promotes community-level education to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol, beginning from the very first drop.

Change behavior, strengthen life's immunity

Treating individuals trapped in cycles of substance use or risky behaviors often takes time, requires multiple approaches, and may involve repeated attempts before success is achieved. Patience, coupled with support from others, is a crucial component that can help one reach their goals.

WHO and health experts point out that success in overcoming substance use typically comes from a combination of the following factors:

1. Internal motivation – the starting point of change
2. Support from family and society
3. Professional treatment
4. A supportive environment
5. Goal-setting and planning
6. Follow-up and self-encouragement

1. Internal motivation – the starting point of change

Fear of disease, concerns about health, or a desire not to hurt loved ones are powerful driving forces. Becoming aware that our behavior affects our health, finances, and relationships can spark a new beginning.

2. Support from family and society

Having people who understand and stand by without judgment or blame can reduce feelings of isolation. Support groups, such as drug rehabilitation hotlines, provide a safe space for those trying to quit to share experiences and encouragement.

3. Professional treatment

Experts such as psychiatrists, psychologists, or structured therapy programs (with medication if needed) increase the chances of success—especially with evidence-based methods like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or nicotine replacement therapy in the case of quitting smoking.

CBT is a psychological therapy approach that focuses on changing the “thoughts” (cognitive) and “behaviours” that are the root causes of problems such as stress, anxiety, or addiction. It helps individuals recognize and understand their own negative or distorted thoughts, manage inappropriate emotions and behaviors, and use various techniques such as goal-setting, facing fears, and developing more neutral or positive thinking.

CBT has been scientifically proven effective for treating various conditions including depression, anxiety disorders, panic disorders, and addiction to alcohol and other substances.

4. A supportive environment

Avoiding triggers such as friends who encourage drinking or places associated with substance use, and replacing them with new activities—like exercise, hobbies, or learning new skills—helps foster a healthier lifestyle.

5. Goal-setting and planning

Goals should begin with small steps, such as “no drinking on weekdays,” progressing to “complete abstinence,” along with strategies to handle risky situations and setbacks—such as temporary relapses. These should not be viewed as “failures” but as “learning experiences.”

6. Follow-up and self-encouragement

Keeping track of progress, such as alcohol-free days or changes in emotional well-being, and rewarding oneself for every small success, helps build motivation and inner strength.

Don't wait until it's too late – good health
begins with the last drop



Reducing or quitting alcohol is not merely a habit change—it is a long-term protection of one's life and health. Don't assume that "a little won't hurt," because every drop carries a risk.

If you or someone you love is facing this challenge,

" remember that you are not alone "

**and seeking help is not a sign of weakness—
but the beginning of a powerful transformation.**

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สมาคมเวชศาสตร์วิถีชีวิตและสุขภาวะไทย

The Thai Lifestyle Medicine and Wellbeing Association (TLWA)

Floor 1, Satharanasuk Wisit Building, Faculty of
Public Health, Mahidol University,
420/1 Ratchawithi Road, Ratchathewi, Bangkok
10400, Thailand

Tel. 093-584-0840, 080-989-7415;

Website: TLWA.or.th