

# Avoidance of Risky Substances

It is well known that tobacco use and drinking too much alcohol increases the risk of many chronic diseases and death, which is why avoiding risky substances is so important. People who are ready can and do quit smoking; there are more former smokers in the world now than there are current smokers. Some treatments work for alcohol abuse, but treatments often take time, different approaches and many attempts. Giving yourself patience as well as getting support from others is an important part of reaching your goals.

## Effective Treatment Models

- Counseling
  - Individual, group, telephone
  - Many quick visits
  - Longer more intense visits
- Medications (anti-relapse)
- Counseling plus medication is more effective

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

## Goals for Avoiding Risky Substances

SMART goals guide goal setting to help plan and achieve goals. 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 are you going to do to decrease your substance use?

**Measurable** - How much will you reduce it by?

**Achievable** - Do you have what it takes to follow through?

**Relevant** - What can you actually do? (improvement over perfection)

**Time-Bound** - How frequent? How long will you commit?

## Helpful Resources:

National Quit Link: 1-800-Quit-Now

SmokeFree.gov <https://smokefree.gov/>  
nami.org

NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator  
[alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov](http://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov)

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry  
[www.aaap.org](http://www.aaap.org)

American Psychological Association  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

American Society of Addiction Medicine  
[www.asam.org](http://www.asam.org)

NAADAC Substance Abuse Professionals  
[www.naadac.org](http://www.naadac.org)

National Association of Social Workers  
[www.helpstartshere.org](http://www.helpstartshere.org)

Substance Abuse Treatment Locator  
[www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Moderation Management  
[www.moderation.org](http://www.moderation.org)

Secular Organizations for Sobriety  
[www.sossobriety.org](http://www.sossobriety.org)

SMART Recovery  
[www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org)

Women for Sobriety  
[www.womenforsobriety.org](http://www.womenforsobriety.org)

Al-Anon Family Groups  
[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
[www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)

[www.psychologytoday.com/us](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us)



## Low Risk Drinking Guides by National Institutes of Health

Men

No more than 4 drinks on any day  
No more than 14 drinks in 7 days

Women

No more than 3 drinks in any day  
No more than 7 drinks in 7 days

“Binge” Drinking is defined as:  
5 drinks in 2 hours for men,  
4 drinks in 2 hours for women.

## Guidelines:

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



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