

# UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL

## WHAT'S THE HARM WITH DRINKING ALCOHOL?

- Alcohol can impair brain function and motor skills.
- Affects organs and body systems.
- Heavy and long-term use can increase the risk of certain diseases such as cancers.
- Increases the risk of injuries, accidents, and death.
- Drinking alcohol in youth increases the risk of developing alcohol dependence later.

## BINGE DRINKING & STANDARD DRINK SIZES

- **Binge drinking** is drinking a large amount of alcohol in a short time, raising one's blood alcohol level to 0.08% or higher. This amounts to approximately 4 to 5 standard drinks.
- **What's a standard drink size?**
  - A standard drink contains about 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. This is about:
    - 12 ounces of beer (regular-sized can) with 5% alcohol
    - 8 ounces of malt liquor with 7% alcohol
    - 5 ounces of wine with 12% alcohol
    - A shot or 1.5 ounces of liquor or distilled spirits (40% alcohol)

## WANT TO QUIT?

- Talk to a trusted adult or healthcare provider for support.
- Plan ahead - Make a plan on how to respond if you are faced with alcohol.
- Ask for help - You're not alone, and it's okay to ask for help.
- Practice healthy coping skills and do activities you enjoy.

## RESOURCES

- **Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline:** 1-(800)-327-5050; [www.helplinema.org](http://www.helplinema.org)
- **Boston Children's ASAP Program:** (617)-355-2727; [ASAP@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:ASAP@childrens.harvard.edu)
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** 1-(800)-662-HELP (4357)
- **Walpole Prevention Coalition:** [www.walpolepreventioncoalition.com](http://www.walpolepreventioncoalition.com)

