

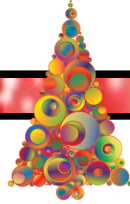
TO YOUR HEALTH

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Cheers!

By Maeve Lobo, LICSW



While Immanuel Kant, a philosopher with a fine vintage, was known to be a bit of a party animal, Frederick Nietzsche famously recommended against drinking alcohol. Most of us spend our lives trying to make responsible choices and alcohol is one of those decisions that carry a lot of cultural baggage. We are in the midst of the holiday season, and will no doubt enjoy a drink, but it is worth keeping in mind that alcohol can take a toll on an aging body.

According to the *National Poll on Healthy Aging* (June/July 2021) over half of older adults reported drinking as they enjoyed the taste of alcohol. Others stated they drank for social reasons and to help them relax. A small percentage stated it was part of their routine, helped improve their mood and manage pain. Older Americans observed that a lack of companionship during the COVID restrictions may have increased their need to have a drink. The poll also revealed more risky drinking habits during COVID. Nevertheless, the majority of older adults surveyed noted having few concerns about their alcohol consumption.

A research paper that came out in 2017 (niaaa.nih.gov) indicated that alcohol consumption had steadily increased in the over sixty population and this rise was particularly marked among women. Binge drinking among individuals over the age of 65 has also increased. The longitudinal survey covered over 65,000 correspondents. Aging essentially increases our sensitivity to alcohol. Coupled with medications and health problems, older adults are more susceptible to falls, car crashes and other injuries. *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020 - 2025* makes no recommendation for drinking in older adults.

However, for those who choose to drink, it proposes that this should be limited to two drinks a day for men and one or less for women. It is important to stay hydrated and drink water, low fat milk and unsweetened beverages like fruit and vegetable juice.

Most prescribed medications come with warnings about drinking alcohol. There are also over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies that have an adverse effect when alcohol is consumed. Medications that interact poorly with alcohol include:

- Aspirin
- Acetaminophen
- Cold and allergy medicine
- Cough syrup
- Sleeping pills
- Pain medication
- Anxiety or depression medicine



Drowsiness, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, headaches and fainting are some of the side effects of mixing alcohol with these medications.

There are a constellation of health problems common in older adults that are exacerbated when drinking. The NIH include the following diseases in this group:



- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Congestive heart failure
- Liver problems
- Osteoporosis
- Memory problems
- Mood disorders

It is well established that drinking less is better for health. Recognize personal limits and set up boundaries to manage holiday drinking. Make the holidays merry and bright with the added benefit of safe drinking goals.

Charitable Giving – Dodging the Scammers



According to Laurie Styron, Executive Director of CharityWatch, a third of all donations are made in the month of December. Here are a few tips about giving:

- Avoid middleman and give directly.
- Never send cash. Consider using a credit card as it provides more protection than a debit card. If an organization suggests you donate by gift card, wire transfer or cash it is probably a scam. Some scammers will thank you before you make a donation.
- Crowdfunding online has become very popular in recent years. Anyone can start a fund raiser and it is not regulated by the IRS or other Federal sources. There are countless scammers who work on this platform.
- Keep your emotions in check. Charities can have emotional and evocative advertising which prompt spontaneous giving. Carefully consider the charities you want to support.
- Always examine the claims charities make.
- Keep a record of your giving.
- Donate to top rated Charities that utilize over 75% of their income on programs.

Some top-rated charities :

- 350.org
- ACLU
- Bread for the World Institute
- Friends of Animals
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- National Federation of the Blind
- Dana Faber Cancer Institute
- World Vision
- Save the Children
- CARE USA
- NAMI
- National Council on Aging

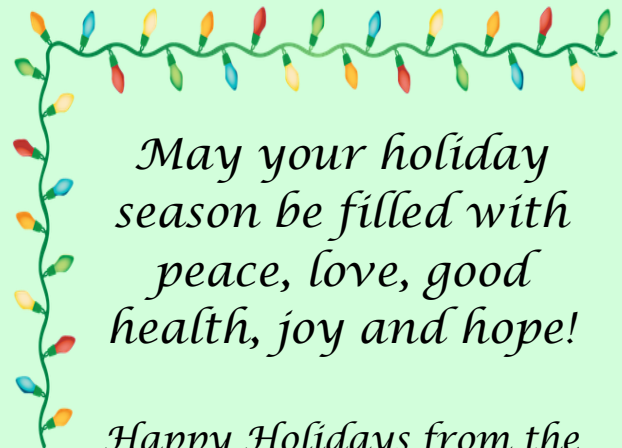
For a more comprehensive list check out charitywatch.org. Be vigilant about scammers this holiday season.

Sources: charitywatch.org,
nationalgivingmonth.org,
charitynavigator.org, fbi.gov



Welcome!

Please help the clinic welcome our new Nurse Practitioner, **Julie Cahill-Hollingsworth**. She comes to us with extensive experience having worked for several years at Massachusetts General Hospital in many departments ranging from the Emergency Room, Medical Intensive Care Unit, Primary Care and Cardiology. She earned her Master of Science degree from Northeastern University in Boston and lives right here in Bedford. Julie will be covering the Clinic on weekends.



May your holiday season be filled with peace, love, good health, joy and hope!

*Happy Holidays from the Clinic Staff
Susan, Debbie, Donny,
Maeve, Kimberly, Cherie
and Marcia*

