

# 2017 Community Bulletin: Alcohol and Cancer



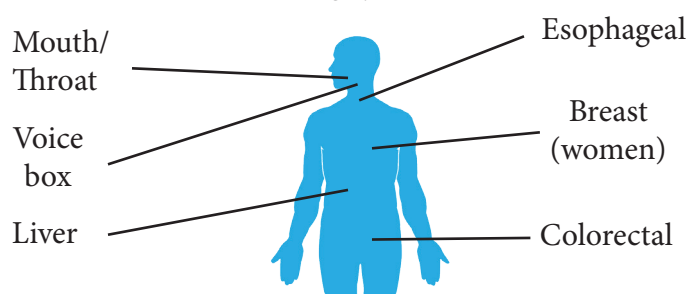
*Algoma*  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Santé publique Algoma

## Did you know?

- Drinking alcohol is directly linked to several types of cancer;
- Just one drink a day can raise your alcohol-related cancer risk; and,
- Drinking less or not at all is the best way to reduce your risk.



Having 1-3 drinks a day can **increase your risk of cancer** compared to non-drinkers for the following types:<sup>1</sup>



Between **2010 and 2012 in Algoma**, estimates show alcohol use is accountable for:<sup>2,3</sup>

**173** **new cases**  
**of cancer**

**63** **deaths**  
**from cancer**

## Self-reported alcohol use in 2013/2014 by Algoma residents

**30.2%** of Algoma residents 19+ self-report having 1-3 drinks a day.<sup>4</sup>



**48.6%** of Algoma residents 19+ self-report exceeding the Low Risk Drinking Guidelines.<sup>4</sup>



## Manage your alcohol-related cancer Risk

- Know and follow Canada's [Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#)
- Become familiar with standard drink sizes
- If you don't drink, don't start.
- Check out [Rethink Your Drinking](#) for more information

Data sources: <sup>1</sup>Bagnardi, V. et al. Alcohol consumption and site-specific cancer risk: a comprehensive dose-response meta-analysis. Br J Cancer. 2015 Feb 3; 112(3): 580-93. <sup>2</sup>Praud, D. et al. Cancer incidence and mortality attributable to alcohol consumption. Int J Cancer. 2016 Mar 15; 138(6): 1380-7. <sup>3</sup>CCO SEER\*Stat Package Release 10 - OCR (Aug. 2015). Pop Est Summary (Statistics Canada, Ontario Ministry Finance), Fall 2014 release, based on the 2011 Census. <sup>4</sup>Canadian Community Health Survey [2013/2014], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario MOHLTC

Together with our communities, Algoma Public Health is a leader in promoting and protecting health and well-being

## Spotlight on Alcohol and Cancer

For many Canadians drinking alcohol is seen as an everyday part of life. We are bombarded with media images that encourage us to “raise a glass” for all occasions. We are encouraged to drink alcohol to celebrate, to gear up, to wind down, because we ‘deserve it’, because it’s Friday, because the week was great or the week was horrible...basically the media tells us that it is always time to ‘toss back a cold brew, lift our glass or pour a stiff drink.’

But in this day and age when so many people are looking to be healthier and live longer is this really the message we should be listening to? In 2010, globally, there were 5 million deaths related to alcohol use and alcohol related harms<sup>1</sup>. While some of these deaths were associated with heavy drinkers and obvious issues like drinking and driving a surprising number of deaths were related to moderate drinkers and connected to chronic health issues including cancer. Most people are aware that alcohol can impact your health, but many are unaware or unclear of the connection between alcohol and cancer.

In 2012 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), estimated that there were 8.2 million cancer related deaths worldwide<sup>2</sup>. Recent studies have clearly linked alcohol to 6 types of cancer: mouth and throat, esophageal, laryngeal (or voice box), liver, colorectal, and breast<sup>3</sup>. Approximately 6% of cancer deaths are believed to be caused by alcohol use which amounts to roughly half a million deaths annually<sup>2</sup>. The majority of which could be eliminated by simply reducing how much alcohol you drink.

### Take Positive Action

Every day we hear messages about being socially responsible when we drink alcohol i.e. not drinking and driving, knowing our limits, avoiding dangerous situations, keeping ourselves and our friends safe. Many of us assume that drinking moderately (1-3 drinks a day) is both responsible and healthy. Unfortunately the reality is even consuming as little as 1 drink per day can significantly increase your risk of some cancers<sup>4</sup>.

Most of us want to live long and healthy lives. We want to be there for the important moments like graduations, new jobs, weddings, children, grandchildren and retirements. Perhaps with these things in mind you are considering or have already made positive changes in your life such as: eating better, exercising more, reducing your stress or getting more sleep? If you are truly looking to be healthier and live longer consider reducing your cancer risks by reducing how much alcohol you drink!

**The bottom line is the less alcohol you drink the lower your risk of developing cancer and being around to enjoy those important moments. Drink Less Live More!**

1) Lim, Stephen S et al., A comparative risk assessment of burden of disease and injury attributable to 67 risk factors and risk factor clusters in 21 regions, 1990–2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010  
The Lancet, Volume 380, Issue 9859, 2224 – 2260

2) American Cancer Society. Global Cancer Facts & Figures 3rd Edition. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2015.

3) Connor, J. (2017) Alcohol consumption as a cause of cancer. Addiction, 112: 222–228. doi: 10.1111/add.13477.

4) World Health Organization, issuing body. (2014). Global status report on alcohol and health 2014. Geneva : World Health Organization, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112736/1/9789240692763\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112736/1/9789240692763_eng.pdf)