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APRIL

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# ALCOHOL AWARENESS

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• MONTH •

April is Alcohol Awareness Month—a time to focus on understanding the effects of alcohol on our health and well-being. Whether you drink occasionally, socially, or not at all, it is important to know how alcohol can impact your body, mind, and relationships.

## Harmful Effects of Alcohol

- **Health Risks:** Heavy drinking increases the risk of depression, heart disease, liver disease, sleep disorders, stroke, and several types of cancer (including mouth, liver, and breast cancer).
- **Injury & Death:** Alcohol is a factor in approximately 60% of fatal burn injuries, drownings, and homicides, as well as about 40% of suicides, falls, and vehicle accident deaths.
- **Short-Term Effects:** Alcohol can cause impaired judgment and coordination, headaches, nausea, fatigue, and poor sleep quality.
- **Long-Term Effects:** Prolonged alcohol use may lead to liver (such as cirrhosis and liver failure), heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, digestive problems, and a weakened immune system.

## Using Alcohol Wisely

- **Mixing with Medication:** Some prescription drugs and alcohol can be a dangerous or even fatal combination. Always check with your doctor.
- **Drink Slowly:** Pace yourself by taking breaks between sips and drinking water.
- **Eat While Drinking:** Consuming food while drinking helps slow the absorption of alcohol.
- **Do Not Drink and Drive:** Always arrange for a sober driver if you plan to drink.

## Alcohol & Drug Abuse vs. Dependence

- **Abuse:** Using alcohol or drugs leads to problems at work, school, or home; legal issues; or continued use despite relationship problems.
- **Dependence (Addiction):** Includes cravings, inability to stop, withdrawal symptoms, and needing more to feel the same effects (tolerance).

## Emotional Wellbeing Solution

EMR offers employees and their dependents confidential access to Optum's Emotional Wellbeing Solutions, which includes up to six counseling sessions per issue, per year—either in person or by phone—with licensed professionals. Support is available for a wide range of personal and emotional concerns.

## Sober Sidekick: Recovery Support

As part of your benefits, you also have free access to the Sober Sidekick mobile app, providing 24/7 peer-to-peer support, virtual 12-step meetings, educational resources, and tools to track your recovery progress. The app connects you with a supportive community to help sustain recovery and prevent relapse. To get started, visit [sobersidekick.replit.app/{{ACC}}](https://sobersidekick.replit.app/{{ACC}}). For any questions, call **866.374.6061** or visit [www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com) (access code: **EMR**).

If you are having a difficult time, remember you are not alone. You can find support by visiting **Alcoholics Anonymous** to locate a meeting near you.

## Sources

- [Using Alcohol Wisely](#)
- [Get Help for a Drinking Problem](#)
- [Alcohols effects alternatives](#)

Please note: This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult your healthcare provider for medical concerns. Please refer to your plan documents for specific benefit details and limitations.