

**Table 1. Categories and Definitions of Alcohol Use Patterns**

<b>Alcohol Pattern</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
At-risk drinking*	Men <65 years: > 14 drinks per week or > 4 drinks per occasion Women <65 years: >7 drinks per week or > 3 drinks per occasion Men and women ≥ 65 years: 1 drink per day
Hazardous drinking**	At risk for adverse consequences from alcohol
Harmful drinking**	Alcohol is causing physical or psychological harm
DSM-IV alcohol abuse***	≥1 of the following events in a year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recurrent use resulting in failure to fulfill major role obligations</li> <li>• Recurrent use in hazardous situations</li> <li>• Recurrent alcohol-related legal problems (e.g. driving under the influence)</li> <li>• Continued use despite social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by alcohol</li> </ul>
DSM-IV alcohol dependence ***	≥3 of the following events in a year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerance (increased amounts to achieve effect; diminished effect from same amount)</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Great deal of time spent obtaining alcohol, using it, or recovering from its effects</li> <li>• Important activities given up or reduced because of alcohol</li> <li>• Drinking more or longer than intended</li> <li>• Persistent desire for alcohol or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control use</li> <li>• Use continued despite knowledge of having a physical or psychological problem caused or exacerbated by alcohol</li> </ul>

\* As defined by the Natl. Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

\*\* As defined by the World Health Organization

\*\*\* As defined by the American Psychiatric Association

**CAGE Questionnaire**

1. Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover (**E**ye-opener)?

*Post-test probability of alcohol dependence has been found to be 7%, 46%, 72%, 88%, and 98% with CAGE scores of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively.*

**Brief Interventions to Reduce Alcohol Consumption in Patients with At-Risk Drinking**

- Feedback on clinical assessment and adverse effects of alcohol
- Discussion of adverse effects of alcohol consumption
- Comparison to national drinking norms
- Specify recommended drinking limits
- Prescription to "cut down drinking"
- Provide patient education material from the NIAAA
- Daily self-monitoring log information from the NIAAA
- Repeated office sessions

*NIAAA = National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*

**AUDIT-C Questionnaire**

How often did you have a drink containing alcohol in the past year?

- Never (0 points)
- Monthly or less (1 point)
- 2-4 times per month (2 points)
- 2-3 times per week (3 points)
- 4 or more times/week (4 points)

How many drinks did you have on a typical day when you were drinking in the past year?

- None or 1-2 (0 points)
- 3 – 4 (1 point)
- 5 – 6 (2 points)
- 7 – 9 (3 points)
- 10 or more (4 points)

How often did you have 6 or more drinks on one occasion in the past year?

- Never (0 points)
- Less than monthly (1 point)
- Monthly (2 points)
- Weekly (3 points)
- Daily or almost daily (4 points)

*Add up points to calculate a score of 1 to 12. Positive screen for at-risk drinking is >4 pts in men and >3 pts in women. The higher the AUDIT-C score, the more likely it is that the patient's drinking has adverse health and safety effects.*

**References:**

1. Natl. Inst. On Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much: A Clinician's Guide. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Natl. Institutes of Health. NIH Publication No. 07-3769. 2007.
2. Buschbaum DG, Buchanan RG, Centor RM, et al. Screening for alcohol abuse using CAGE scores and likelihood ratios. Ann Intern Med. 1991; 115:774-7
3. Wilson JF. In the Clinic: Alcohol use. Ann Intern Med. March 2009; ITC3-1-16.