

STEP 3: ADVISE AND ASSIST — A BRIEF INTERVENTION

As a family physician you have a unique opportunity using your established relationship with patients and families to identify risky behaviors such as alcohol abuse and negotiate change. Once the screen has been completed it is time to discuss the results, determine readiness for change, provide advice and negotiate an action plan.

Advise and Assist

- **State your concern.**

Give feedback based on the drinking pattern or something the patient has said: "What you've told me about your drinking concerns me."

Determine readiness by asking, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready are you to change any aspect of your drinking." (1 being lowest level of readiness, 10 being highest)

- **Give your advice.**

Start a dialogue with your patient about their drinking and willingness to change. Based on the CAGE assessment offer advice, "I think you should stop." or "I think you should cut back."

The low risk NIAAA screening limits for drinking are:

MEN:

In a typical WEEK	On any DAY
No more than 14	Never More than 5

WOMEN:

In a typical WEEK	On any DAY
No more than 7	Never more than 4

Low risk means that you are less likely to experience injury or illness if you stay within these guidelines. Within these guidelines your chances of having an alcohol disorder are "Less than 1 in 100."

Counseling Tips

- *Use an empathetic, nonconfrontational style.*
- *Offer your patient choices about how to make changes.*
- *Emphasize your patient's responsibility for changing drinking behavior.*
- *Convey confidence in your patient's ability to change drinking behavior.*

- **Gauge readiness.**

"What do you think? Are you ready to try to cut down/abstain?" Negotiate an action plan with the patients.

"What do you think you can do to stay within the safe drinking guidelines? "

Please turn over. (more information on the back)



