

Substance misuse among older adults is often missed, attributed to normal aging or to chronic disease

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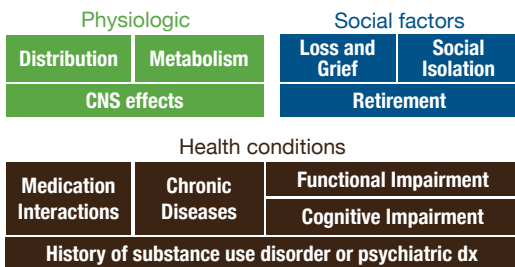
HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU? | HOW READY ARE YOU? | HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU?

EXTREMELY

Key points

- Older adult: 65+ years
- Of older adults who drink, almost 1 in 4 exceed lower risk limits and/or may be affected by combined use of alcohol and medications or alcohol and comorbid conditions
- Screening tools: AUDIT validated in older adults; cut-off score for low-risk alcohol use = 5

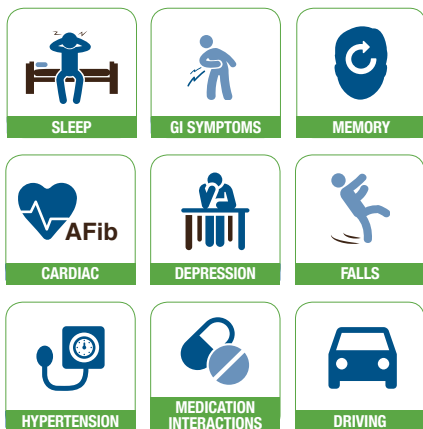
Considerations for clinicians



Brief interventions with older adults

- Have been shown to be effective
- Linking to chief concern(s), signs or symptoms may increase effectiveness

Key points for giving feedback



Lower Risk Drink Limits for Men and Women Over 65

Per Week	No more than 7 drinks
On any single day	No more than 3 drinks

Why lower limits?

- Increased blood alcohol level per amount consumed
- Psychomotor, cognitive and GI symptoms increase with age
- Alcohol may worsen common co-occurring health problems
- Potential medication interactions, especially:
 - Medications with increased risk for bleeding e.g. NSAIDs, anticoagulants
 - Medications that increase risk for sedation e.g. opioids, sedatives
 - Medications with decreased efficacy due to alcohol e.g. ulcer medications, antidepressants

Marijuana and Older Adults

Cannabis and cannabinoids may result in clinically significant pain reduction – however:

- Smoking associated with chronic cough/phlegm
- Heavier use may result in panic or anxiety attacks and increase suicidal thoughts
- May result in medication interactions
- Temporarily increases heart rate and BP

MARIJUANA GUIDELINE www.ImprovingHealthColorado.org/Resources

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

- Long-term outcomes equivalent or better than those in younger adults
- Possible barriers: transportation, mobility and/or hearing impairment, being homebound

FIND SERVICES www.LinkinCare.org

Opioids and Sedative-Hypnotic Medications

- ~49% of older adults used prescription psychoactive medications in the past year; 2-5% misused them
- In older adults: decreased lean body mass, body water, renal and hepatic clearance and increased body fat → increased drug effects
- Use increases risk of falls, fractures, cognitive impairment, delirium, motor vehicle accidents
- Non-drug therapies are more effective for long-term management of insomnia and back pain

MORE INFORMATION www.ImprovingHealthColorado.org



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