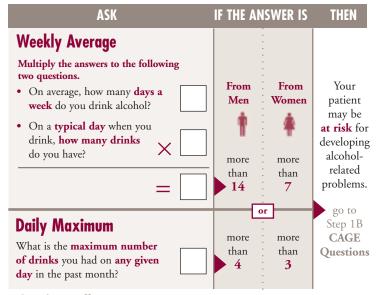
Step 1A: Ask the quantity-frequency questions



Below the cutoffs?

If so, screening can stop here unless patients who drink are (1) pregnant or trying to conceive (they need advice to abstain) or (2) over age 65, frail, or taking medications that interact with alcohol (they may have problems at lower drinking levels and thus may need advice to cut down; see Step 3). Other drinkers below the cutoffs may benefit from reminders that no drinking level is risk free and any drinking can impair driving tasks.

Step 1B: Ask the CAGE questions

C Have you ever felt that you should Cut down on your drinking?

A Have people **Annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?

G Have you ever felt bad or **Guilty** about your drinking?

E Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover? (Eye-opener)

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then ask "Has this occurred during the past year?"

IF THE ANSWER IS	THEN
YES to 3 or 4 questions in the past year	Your patient may be alcohol dependent
YES to 1 or 2 questions in the past year	Your patient may have current alcohol-related problems
NO to all questions	Your patient may still be at risk because of the elevated drinking level

If your patient exceeds the screening limits OR answers "yes" to one or more CAGE questions, go to steps 2–4.

Step 2: Assess

- Dependence indicators
- Medical factors
- Behavioral factors
- Family history

Step 3: Advise and assist

- State your concern
- Give your advice
- Gauge patient's readiness to change
- Negotiate an action plan
 - for **cutting down:** recommend lower limits; set a drinking goal
 - for **abstaining:** refer to an alcohol treatment center (To find local centers, call 1-800-662-HELP or visit http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov.)

Step 4: Arrange followup

• Make plans to monitor patient progress

What is a standard drink?

A standard drink contains about 14 grams (about 0.6 fluid ounces) of pure alcohol. Below are approximate standard drink equivalents.



Note: People buy many of these drinks in containers that hold multiple standard drinks. For example, malt liquor is often sold in 16-, 22-, or 40-oz. containers that hold between two and five standard drinks, and table wine is typically sold in 25 oz. (750 ml.) bottles that hold five standard drinks.

A POCKET GUIDE FOR

Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention

This pocket guide is condensed from the 22-page NIAAA guide, *Helping Patients With Alcohol Problems*. For copies of the full guide or more copies of this card, contact:

NIAAA Publications Distribution Center P.O. Box 10686, Rockville, MD 20849-0686 (301) 443–3860

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