



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

Media Release

Rethink Your Drinking this St. Patrick's Day

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Heavy drinking is defined as consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks, per occasion, once a month or more. "Drinking too much, too often is a concerning issue," says Raili Quatham, Public Health Nurse. "People are often unaware of the short- and long-term consequences of over-drinking."

Whether it is a night of St. Patrick's Day celebration or drinking games, it's easy to lose track of how many drinks you've had. Continuous drinking can increase the risk of short- and long-term alcohol related-harm. The most common short-term risk of heavy drinking is a 'hangover' – headache, fatigue and nausea. However, more serious risks include:

- Alcohol poisoning
- Violence and injuries (car crashes, falls, fights)
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Poor or regrettable decisions
- Problems with finances, work or school

There are many long-term health effects of heavy drinking, including liver cirrhosis, heart problems, and cancer, to name a few. Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines, which help adults who choose to drink to make informed choices about their alcohol consumption, recommend:

- Women consume no more than 10 drinks a week and no more than two drinks a day most days; and
- Men consume no more than 15 drinks a week and no more than three drinks a day most days.

For special occasions, the Guidelines recommend no more than 3 drinks at any one time to help limit harm from alcohol consumption. "These guidelines are limits, not goals – less alcohol, or no alcohol at all, is best," adds Raili Quatham. "And it doesn't work to save all of your drinks for the weekend." There is no such thing as 'risk-free' drinking, but following the Guidelines can lower your risk.

The Health Unit's campaign, ***Rethink Your Drinking***, is designed to promote the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines and help change the way we think about and use alcohol.

For more information, visit www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca.

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