

Cut down on alcohol, cut down on risk

BY RENEE SKOGLUND
STAFF WRITER
rskoglund@ee.ohio.com

With the holiday party season in full swing, now is the time to assess your relationship with alcohol. Do you really know how much alcohol you consume on a weekly basis? Possibly 10, 20 drinks ... or more?

Most people don't know their weekly consumption rate, according to Teresa Herzog Mourad, coordinator of the University of Michigan's DrinkWise, a program for non-alcoholics who want to reduce their drinking and lower their health risk.

"It's often difficult for a person to know just how much they drink," she said. "I teach people what is a drink. I meet people

with a high degree of education and they have no idea how many drinks are in a bottle of wine."

For the record, a 750 ml. bottle of wine yields five 5-ounce glasses.

DrinkWise, which the U-M has offered since 1994, focuses on reducing alcohol intake in people with mild to moderate alcohol problems. Based on more than 20 years of Canadian research, it is currently offered only by the U-M and at locations in North Carolina and Ontario.

According to program statistics, DrinkWise has helped participants cut their alcohol intake by an average of 66 percent. Three-quarters of participants remain at or below the goal drinking levels nine months after completing the series of

one-on-one and group counseling sessions.

DrinkWise is not a program for people who are severely dependent on alcohol.

"Those people deserve and warrant more attention. They have a stronger relationship with alcohol," said Herzog Mourad.

Setting limits

For men, the absolute ceiling for moderate drinking is no more than 10 drinks a week, drinking no more than four days a week and never on consecutive days, say medical experts who deal with patients with alcohol problems. And moderate drinking means no more than three drinks on one occasion and never more than one drink per hour.

For women, except for limiting drinks to eight a week and no more than two on one occasion, the parameters are the same. For seniors 65 and older, moderate drinking is limited to one drink a day.

DrinkWise clients, whose average age is 44, come into the program averaging 24 drinks a week for men and 19 drinks a week for women. The program's goal is threefold: Educate clients about the risks of heavy drinking, coach them on ways to cut back, and support them in their own decisions to obtain or moderate their drinking.

For example, participants may set a daily limit of two or three drinks, no more than four days a week. They may choose to space out their drinks and set a "win-

dow" of time during a party when they may drink. They may also start a diary of their drinking or get involved in leisure activities that don't create an environment for drinking alcohol.

While the majority of participants decide to limit their drinking, 38 percent choose abstinence, said Herzog Mourad.

"The discipline to drink moderately is too much work. It takes the fun out of drinking, so they stop."

The DrinkWise program starts with a one-hour assessment session with a counselor who is experienced in alcohol education and has a background in nursing, social work or health education. Those who decide to continue then jointly develop an action

plan with their counselor. They can take part in either four one-hour private sessions, five two-hour group sessions, or four one-hour telephone sessions over a seven-to-10 week period.

DrinkWise also requires an initial two-week abstinence period "to eliminate tolerance and uncover the natural coping abilities," said Herzog Mourad. During this period, participants are required to document how they "feel" without alcohol.

Each participant is contacted at three and nine months after completing the program for a follow-up telephone session. The cost is \$495 and is not reimbursed by insurers.

Be a responsible host this season

Monitoring alcohol consumption at a holiday party is an important part of the host's responsibility. Attitudes and laws have changed, and drinking and driving is now recognized as a serious crime. It is the host's responsibility to prevent any guests from drinking too much.

The following guidelines were designed to assist social hosts. They should allow for safe and

successful entertainment.

■ Encouraging socializing by guests through planned activities can curb over-drinking by guests who are restless, shy, or have little in common with you other guests. When choosing activities, pick those that allow guests to meet and mingle in a comfortable atmosphere.

■ One tactic to prevent excessive drinking is to serve plenty of

good food. Foods high in carbohydrate content are recommended. These include pastas, cheese, meat, crackers and breads. Foods like this stay in the stomach longer, allowing the body to absorb the alcohol at a slower rate.

■ Caution is needed when selecting foods high in salt. These foods increase thirst and

Please see Host, D3

Manor
39000 Schoolcraft Road (just W. of Newburgh) • Livonia
New Year's Eve Gala
Monday, December 31, 2001 • 7:00pm - 1:30am
Live Entertainment, in a variety of styles, by
BLUE GENES BAND
Menu
An Elaborate Display of Hors d'oeuvres from 7:00-8:00
Deluxe Premium Open Bar • Wine Served with Dinner
Dinner Served at 8:00pm
Vineyard Salad • Pasta Course • Combination Dinner Entree of Filet
Mignon with Laurel Zip Sauce and Chicken Florentine or Vegetarian Entree
(available upon request at time of ticket purchase only)
Accompanied by Fresh Vegetable & Potato Du Jour
Dessert:
Individual Torte Presented on a Sauce Painted Plate
Afterglow at 12:05am
Espresso, Cappuccino, Pizza and Coney Dogs
Tickets... \$85 Per Person
Reservations limited. All reserved seating, no admittance after 8:30pm. Must be
21 years or older. Payments by VISA/MC/Discover, Cash or Check with ID #.
To make your reservations call:
(734) 462-0770

Julie's BRIDAL IMPORTS
of Plymouth
Timeless Elegance and Beauty
Featuring the Designs of:
Reem Acra • Lazaro • St. Pucci • Paloma Blance • Eve of Mlady • Christos • Demetrios • Paula Varsalona
• Jasmine • Monique Lhuillier • Diamond Collection • Jim Hjelm • Watters & Watters and many more
Michigan's Largest Selection From Which To Choose!
Redeem this ad for a FREE veil with your bridal gown purchase (previous orders excluded)
570 South Main Street • Plymouth • (734) 455-1100

URGENT CARE
NURSE
JUST THINK OF IT AS THE EXPRESS LANE FOR
SPRAINS, COUGHS
AND SCRAPES.
Open from 11 a.m. until 11 p.m. every day, our Urgent Care Center is designed expressly
to treating minor injuries and illnesses. Which, in terms of convenience, is nothing short
of major. Learn more by calling 1 888-464-WELL or visit www.stmarymercy.org.
ST. MARY MERCY HOSPITAL
Livonia, MI

Happy Holidays
We pause to give
thanks for our
many blessings,
you are
among them.
THE TROWBRIDGE
(248) 352-0208
A Premier Retirement Community
24111 Civic Center Drive • Southfield, MI 48034
Equal Housing Opportunity Equal Opportunity Employer