

LifeSolutions

Alcohol use and social isolation: A dangerous duo



Practicing social distancing, working from home, and worrying about COVID-19's lasting impact can leave you feeling sad, anxious, and overwhelmed. While it's important to find ways to de-stress and decompress, you should be cautious about turning to alcoholic beverages.

Excessive drinking while socially isolating is not a helpful coping strategy, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. The agency notes that alcohol "is known to increase the symptoms of panic and anxiety disorders, depression, and other mental disorders." Furthermore, WHO says, alcohol use:

- Can harm your health. Alcohol weakens the immune system and can make you more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Can add hundreds of calories to your diet per day. To relieve stress, try exercising. It will increase your physical activity level and improve your immunity.
- Can negatively affect your intimate partner and your children (if applicable). Research shows that alcohol use can increase both the occurrence and severity of domestic violence. Drinking can also intensify child abuse or neglect.
- Can keep you from being at your best during business hours. Alcohol can slow your reaction times, muddle your thinking, and cause you to slur your speech. Your employer is counting on you to be at your best, and drinking on the job won't help with that.

Perhaps most important, WHO notes, drinking alcohol while socially isolating may lead you to develop an alcohol use problem and increase your suicide risk.*

If you or a loved one needs help to cope with the COVID-19 crisis, call LifeSolutions. We offer counseling and other stress management resources that are private, confidential, and available at no cost to you.

COVID-19 has forced us to separate physically, but LifeSolutions is always here for you emotionally. Call us today for help.

LifeSolutions is here to help.
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**If you are considering suicide or are concerned that a loved one is at risk, please seek help immediately. Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Help is available 24/7 and you can remain anonymous.*

Sources:

Alcohol and COVID-19: What you need to know. World Health Organization. Accessed April 21, 2020. http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/437608/Alcohol-and-COVID-19-what-you-need-to-know.pdf

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