

Monthly Newsletter for Woodlands' CCM Program



This January take time to re-evaluate your alcohol use

By Mark M. Ryan MD

In 2020 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [updated guidelines](#) for alcohol consumption to include the following statement: “individuals who do not drink alcohol should not start drinking for any reason and that if adults of legal drinking age choose to drink alcoholic beverages, drinking less is better for health than drinking more”. The current guidelines continue to provide a limitation. The new recommendations continue to state that for men, moderate drinking should be limited to two drinks per day, while women should limit their intake to one drink per day.

These new recommendations are in light of an accumulation of evidence over the previous twenty years showing the net negative effect of alcohol on an individual's health. Despite this, alcohol consumption is a common social activity undertaken by close to 70% of American adults. While less than 10% of Americans drink alcohol every day, there still exists a widely held belief that some alcohol use, red wine in particular, has a net positive effect on an individual's health.

More recent evidence has shown that the overall effect of alcohol use raises blood pressure, decreases sleep efficiency, impairs liver function, increases the incidence of anxiety and depression, and increases the risk of certain cancers. These risks far outweigh any potential benefit of alcohol use.

A key area that I focus on with patients is the effect of alcohol on mental health. Excess alcohol use can lead to an increased risk of depression and anxiety disorders. Additionally, excessive drinking impairs the quality of your sleep, which then impairs your cognitive function and memory, leading to difficulties with decision-making and problem-solving.

At all of our primary care locations in Woodlands, we have patients complete an annual alcohol use screening as part of their annual wellness visit. But you do not have to wait until your annual visit to think about your current alcohol use and whether it is adversely affecting your overall health. Take the month of January to assess your use of alcohol and whether you need advice or assistance in decreasing it.

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>>> IN THE NEWS

Does montelukast (Singulair) cause depression?

In 2020 The FDA issued a black-box warning that patients taking montelukast for asthma or chronic sinusitis could experience aggression, agitation, or suicidal thoughts. These [findings](#) were most notable in children and should not discourage use of the medication in adults.

As air pollution levels increase and air quality decreases, a growing number of patients are developing chronic sinusitis and asthma. These conditions greatly decrease quality of life and limit exercise and activity levels.

Montelukast (Singulair) is a generic medication that has been prescribed to patients with chronic sinusitis and/or mild asthma for the past twenty years. It is a generally well tolerated medication that decreases the need for systemic steroids or frequent courses of antibiotics in a number of patients. Due to the increase in chronic sinusitis and asthma, a growing number of patients are being prescribed montelukast.

In 2020, the FDA issued a warning that the medication can lead to increased risk of aggression, agitation, and suicidal thoughts in patients taking montelukast based on a growing number of side effect reports in younger children. It is important to know that these side effects occur in [<1% of adults](#) and resolves after stopping the medication. If you are taking montelukast and think you are experiencing a side effect, please schedule an appointment with your doctor to further discuss before stopping the medication.



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>>> THIS MONTH

JANUARY IS GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH



- Glaucoma has no early symptoms. The only way to diagnosis it is with an eye exam from an optometrist or ophthalmologist
- Patients with a family history of glaucoma are at higher risk and should start having an annual eye exam to screen for glaucoma at age 40
- Patients with diabetes should have an annual eye exam to monitor for development of glaucoma

Call Us First



Respiratory symptoms don't improve after your doctor's visit?

Have an upper respiratory infection that is not improving despite medication from your recent visit? Our physicians are on-call 24/7 and available to give you advice on the next step in your treatment plan.

Call **850-696-4000** and ask the operator for the Woodlands primary care physician on-call prior to going to the emergency room.

