

Which Alcohol Screening Instrument to Use?

The following table briefly describes several validated alcohol screening tools. Recommended instruments ask about quantity or frequency of alcohol consumption.

CDC Recommended Instruments ^b	Name	# Items	Validated Setting	Validated Populations	Objective	Administration /Scoring	Advantages	Limitations
	Single Question Alcohol Screen ^a	1	Primary care	Adults	Detect risky drinking amounts	<1 min	Very short, quick to administer, simple to score	Does not ask about frequency of consumption
	AUDIT 1-3 ^b	3	Primary care	Adults	Detect risky drinking patterns	1 min/1 min	Identifies at-risk use, short, can be added to longer intake	Does not detect experience of alcohol-related harms
	AUDIT (U.S.) ^b	10	Primary care	Adults, adolescents (age 12 years +)	Detect risky drinking patterns and alcohol-related harms	<5 min/1 min	Comprehensive, validated in broad set of populations, available in several languages	Length, time to score
The following common instruments are validated but do not directly measure alcohol consumption and are therefore considered less effective for alcohol SBI.								
CAGE ^b	4	Primary care	Adults, adolescents (age 16 years)	Detect alcohol dependence	1 min	Widely known, often already in EHR	Not designed to detect broader risky drinking patterns	
T-ACE ^c	4	Ob/Gyn settings, Primary care	Adults, pregnant women	Assess risky drinking during pregnancy	1 min	Short, validated among pregnant women	Requires additional quantity and frequency information	
TWEAK ^d	5	Ob/Gyn settings, Primary care, Emergency departments	Adults	Assess risky drinking during pregnancy	<2 min/1min	Validated among pregnant women	Requires quantity and frequency information	

a Smith PC et al. Primary care validation of a single question alcohol screening test. *J Gen Intern Med* 2009 Jul;24(7):783-8. b Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Planning and Implementing Screening and Brief Intervention for Risky Alcohol Use: A Step-by-Step Guide for Primary Care Practices*. Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, 2014. c Ewing JA. Detecting alcoholism: The CAGE questionnaire. *JAMA*: 1984 Oct 12;252(14):1905-7. d Sokol R, et.al. The T-ACE questions: practical prenatal detection of risk drinking. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 1989;150:868-70. e Chang G, Wilkins-Haug L, Berman S, Goetz MA. The TWEAK: application in a prenatal setting. *J Stud Alcohol*. 1999;60:306- 309.