

Recommended Alcohol Screening Procedures¹

Many screening instruments are readily available for use in clinical practice but most do not focus directly on quantity. For a very brief alcohol screen, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends either of the following two instruments described below: the Single Question Alcohol Screen or the AUDIT 1-3 (U.S.). For patients who screen positive, the AUDIT (U.S.) should then be completed in order to understand the extent of the problem and provide an effective brief intervention.

Single Question Alcohol Screen

“How many times in the past year have you had X or more drinks in a day?”

[where X is 4 for females, 5 for males]

Positive score = having exceeded defined number of drinks 1 or more times

AUDIT 1–3 (U.S.)

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?
2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?
3. How often do you have X or more drinks on one occasion?

[where X is 4 for females, 5 for males]

Scoring/Cutoff:

≥ 7 = females and males over age 65

≥ 8 = males under age 65

1. 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.