People with epilepsy often ask whether it is safe or not for them to drink alcohol. While current research indicates that adults with epilepsy may have one or two alcoholic drinks a day without any worsening of their seizures or changes in the blood level of their antiepileptic medication, the effects of alcohol can vary between individuals and their specific medication.

The following information is a guide to help people with epilepsy assess the risks associated with the consumption of alcohol.

Interactions of AEDs and alcohol
AEDs and alcohol interact in specific ways. AEDs can make you more sensitive to the sedating effects of alcohol while alcohol can reduce the effectiveness of AEDs making seizures more likely. Alcohol can also exaggerate the side effects of some AEDs. This means it will take fewer drinks to "get drunk" than if you were not taking medication. The results of mixing alcohol with AEDs also depend on which medication you are taking, and this should be discussed with your doctor.

It is also important to bear in mind that taking drugs which act on the brain is likely to make you more sensitive to the effects of alcohol. This means that rather less than the recommended amounts of alcohol for activities such as driving might well affect your competence.

Alcohol and seizures
The risk of seizures for many people with epilepsy is greatly increased after consuming three or more alcoholic drinks a day without any worsening of their seizures or changes in the blood level of their antiepileptic medication, the effects of alcohol can vary between individuals and their specific medication.

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