



Test, Joan
Wednesday, August 01, 2012

Your Health Report

Is your substance use hurting your health?

Joan,

Like most women you face a lot of responsibilities and decisions every day. These include how you take care of yourself and your future. From Dr. Oz to your mother, it seems like everyone has an opinion or advice about how to be healthy.

In this report, **we want to help you learn how your current substance use might be hurting your health.**

Based on what you told us, this report will answer these questions:

- What health problem do I face?
- How do I compare to others?
- What can I do to improve my health and lower my chances of getting hurt?

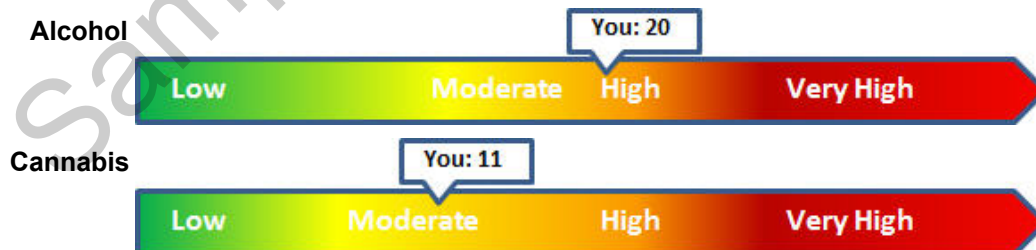
We will offer you many ways to change. If you decide to make some changes, you will be taking better care of yourself and your future. Change requires you to make different choices - and no single choice is right for everyone. **The choice is up to you.**

This report covers health risks and problems from your:

- Alcohol use
- Cannabis use

Your Substance Use Risk Levels

Here is where you fall on a scale from Low to Very high risk.



What do these levels mean?

Low: You have a low risk of having health and other problems due to your current substance use.

Moderate: You run the risk of having health and other problems due to your current substance use.

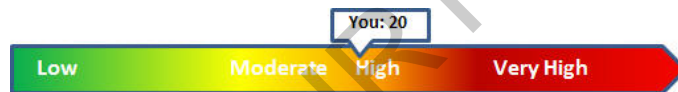
High: Your risk of having serious problems due to your substance use is high. These may be health, social, money, legal, and relationship problems. You may become dependent.

Very High: It is likely you are having serious problems due to your substance use. These may be health, social, money, legal, and relationship problems. You may be dependent or addicted.

Your Alcohol Use

This includes beer, wine, and spirits

Joan, your alcohol use has created a high level of risk for you.



You may have had these problems due to alcohol...sound familiar?

- Health, money, legal or friend and family problems daily or almost daily.
- You failed to do what is normally expected of you monthly.
- You tried and failed to cut down or stop using in the past three months.
- A friend, family member, or other person had concerns about your use more than three months ago.

Joan, some facts about your drinking

- You have about 80 drinks per month or 1,040 each year. That is more than 97 out of 100 Missourians.
- You spent between \$3,120 and \$5,200 on alcohol during the past year.
- Over five years, you have spent between \$15,600 and \$26,000 on alcohol.
- You added 12,000 calories each month. That is more than 45 pounds per year.
- To burn off these calories each week a 155 lb individual would need to:
 - walk fast (4 mph) for 11 hours,
 - ride a bicycle between 14-16 mph for 5 hours, or
 - garden for 9 hours.

What health problems do I face?

Joan, these problems are common if you drink a lot of alcohol:

- Hangovers
- Acting aggressive or violent
- Accidents or hurting yourself
- Poor sexual function
- Aging earlier
- Feeling anxious or depressed
- Problems with relationships, work, and finances
- Trouble remembering things and solving problems

Other, more serious health problems may include:

- Higher risk of stomach ulcers and stomach problems
- High blood pressure or stroke and injuring your brain forever
- Muscle and nerve damage
- Diseases of your liver or pancreas
- Cancers
- Higher chance of suicide

If you are going to drink, **use effective birth control** so you do not become pregnant.

If you are pregnant or could be pregnant, do not drink alcohol:

- Your baby has a higher chance of having Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, which causes birth defects and disabilities
- When you drink alcohol, so does your baby
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant
- There is no safe time and no safe kind of alcohol to drink while pregnant

You can prevent 100% of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders by not drinking while pregnant.

Is there a safe amount I can drink?

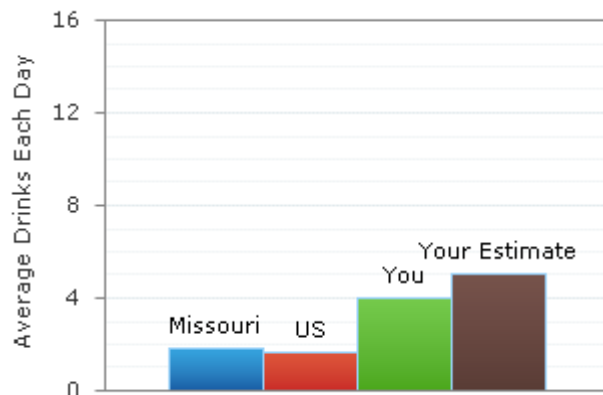
Some say any alcohol is too much. Others think you should only stop if you cannot control it.

The truth is, a woman can have health problems from alcohol if she drinks more than 3 drinks a day on a regular basis. She also has a chance for problems if she drinks more than 7 drinks in a week.



Low-risk drinking limits		MEN	WOMEN
	On any single DAY	No more than 4  drinks on any day	No more than 3  drinks on any day
		** AND **	** AND **
	Per WEEK	No more than 14  drinks per week	No more than 7  drinks per week
<i>To stay low risk, keep within BOTH the single-day AND weekly limits.</i>			

Compare your drinking to others



The chart compares your drinking with women your age in Missouri and the US.

Joan, each day you drink more than most people who drink in Missouri and the US.

Based on what you have told us, you fall into the **Binge group (more than 3 drinks a day)**. In the last three months you report binge drinking weekly.

Your estimates

On average, do people really drink as much as you think they do? The chart also shows how much you think other people drink. Let's look.

- **Drinks per day** - On days that you drink, you have 4 drinks and your estimate is that others have 5 drinks. Your estimate is too high, in the US, the average female your age drinks less than 2 drinks on days that they drink.
- **Drinking days a week** - You said that you drink 6 days a week and you think that others drink 6 days a week. Your estimate is too high, in the US, the average female between the ages of 51 and 60 drinks less than 3 days a week.

So women your age drink fewer days a week and, when they do drink, they drink fewer drinks than you think they do.

Joan's tips for safer alcohol use:

- **Pace and space.** When you do drink, pace yourself. Sip slowly. Have no more than one standard drink with alcohol per hour. Have "drink spacers"—make every other drink a non-alcoholic one, such as water, soda, or juice.
- **Keep track** of how much you drink. Note each drink right before you drink it—this may help you slow down. Find a way that works for you: carry drinking tracker cards in your wallet, make check marks on a kitchen calendar, or enter notes in a mobile phone notepad or personal digital assistant.
- **Set goals.** Decide how many days a week you want to drink and how many drinks you'll have on those days. It's a good idea to have some days when you don't drink.
- **Know your "no."** You're likely to be offered a drink at times when you don't want one. Have a polite "no, thanks" ready. The faster you can say no to these offers, the less likely you are to give in. If you hesitate, it allows you time to think of excuses to go along.

Why is quitting or cutting down good for me?

Because you may:

- Feel better about yourself
- Have clearer and healthier skin
- Losing weight instead of gaining
- Have less anxiety
- Staying out of legal problems

Your Cannabis Use

This includes marijuana, pot, grass, hash

Joan, your cannabis use has created a moderate level of risk for you.



You may have had these problems due to cocaine...sound familiar?

- Health, money, legal or friend and family problems monthly.
- You failed to do what is normally expected of you once or twice in the past three months.
- You tried and failed to cut down or stop using more than three months ago.
- A friend, family member, or other person had concerns about your use in the past three months.

Effects of using cannabis

- Higher chance of heart attack - 4 times higher in the first hour after smoking cannabis
- High blood pressure and heart rate
- Less able to form memories and to remember things
- Less able to shift your attention from one thing to another
- Poor driving

At this time, there is no proven link between smoking cannabis and cancer.



By using cannabis, Joan, you are in the minority. Only 1 out of 10 Missourians used cannabis in the last year.

Joan's tips for safer cannabis use:

Remember what you have just read, this drug **is** harmful to your health. To improve your health the most, quit using either on your own or with professional help. Following these tips can help, but not as much as quitting.

- **Take a break.** Stop using cannabis for a week or two, or wait longer than usual before getting high.
- **Manage your use.** Instead of smoking a whole joint or taking a puff every time it comes around, take a puff or two and then wait a few minutes. You may find that a smaller amount is enough.
- **Use different kinds.** Different kinds of cannabis have a different mix of active ingredients. If you find yourself needing to use more to get the same effect, try another kind.
- **Use stronger cannabis.** Instead of smoking a lot of a weak strain of cannabis, smoke less of a more potent one.
- **Use a vapourizer.** A vapourizer heats the cannabis to release its active ingredients without burning it. Inhaling this vapour is less harmful than smoke. Good quality vapourizers are very efficient so less cannabis is needed.
- **Find alternate ways of using cannabis.** If smoking is a concern, you can try eating foods made with cannabis-infused butters or oils. But be warned: when you eat cannabis you stay high for a lot longer. The high can be much more intense. Start with a very small amount and wait up to an hour to feel the effects to avoid getting too high.
- **Do not add tobacco to your joint.** Tobacco contains nicotine that can quickly create dependency. Also, smoking cannabis with tobacco has been found to increase risk of cancer and lung disease.
- **Buy smaller amounts.** Buying cannabis in bulk is cheaper, but you may end up smoking more than you want to just because it is available.

Why is quitting or cutting down good for me?

Because you may:

- Feel better about yourself
- Have more energy
- Cut your risk of a car accident
- Lose weight instead of gaining
- Breathe more easily
- Lower your risk of a heart attack
- Stay out of legal problems

Your Desire To Change And What You Can Do Next

Joan, if you decide to do so, you can change. We all have different reasons for making a change. Below

we list some ideas for you. These are based on what you told us about how ready you are to change.

How can I start to change my alcohol use?

You may already be taking action to change your alcohol use.

It takes time and energy to make your vision a reality. As you make changes, here are some questions that might help:

- On what date will I start to make a change? Share that date with others.
- How do I measure my success? Set small goals.
- What are the warning signs that a setback might happen?
- What plans do I have for situations that make me want to drink as I used to?
- What has worked to help lower or stop my drinking? Try these things again.

How can I keep up with the changes I already made to my drug use behavior?

You may be making progress to stop or change your drug use. This suggests that you have already changed your drug use.

You must stay alert to keep your progress going. As you continue with your changes, here are some questions that might help:

- Who helped me change? Stay close to these people.
- Who made changes harder? Avoid these people.
- What other changes will help me keep up my progress?
- How do I measure my success? Set small goals to help me keep my new drug use behaviors.
- What other changes might help me avoid a setback?

Final Thoughts

Joan, now you know what risks you face and have some new ideas about how to change. But in the end, change is up to you. Make a few small changes as a start and build on those successes. Be prepared to occasionally fall back into old patterns. Those setbacks do not mean that you have failed. They do mean that you are human. Think about how you can avoid that problem in the future. Talk with your doctor, family, and friends who will help you. Pick up where you left off. You can improve your health.