



# HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

## April Is Alcohol Awareness Month

Native Americans experience alcoholism on a wider level. Their rate of alcoholism is much higher than the rest of the population — one in 10, or almost 12 percent of Native American deaths are alcohol-related.

Traffic accidents and alcoholic liver disease are the most frequent alcohol-related deaths, along with homicide and suicide.

Native Americans were first introduced to alcohol by the European settlers and traders in 1492. Alcohol was often traded for Native American goods, and possibly used to relax the Native Americans in order to receive a better trade.

The newness of the substance had a great influence on the Native American culture. But over the years, research has shown that alcohol's effects on this culture are also due to genetics. Because of alcoholism, Native Americans have high rates of physical health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity, liver disease, hepatitis and stroke.

Native Americans are also at higher risk of being hurt in unintentional accidents and having children die from sudden infant death syndrome due to the result of alcohol. Chronic illnesses can lead to significant stress and increase the risk of alcohol abuse.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a free 12-step recovery group for people struggling with drinking. Meetings are available in our community. AA helps members connect with a sober mentor and work through the 12 steps.

For more information on AA meetings in our community, call the Health & Wellness Behavioral Health Department at 503-879-2026.

## Tips on trying to quit drinking

✓ **Keep track.** Keep track of how much you drink. Find a way that works for you: Carry a drinking tracker card in your wallet, make check marks on a kitchen calendar, or enter notes in a mobile phone notepad or personal digital assistant. Making note of each drink before you drink it may help you slow down when needed.

✓ **Count and measure.** Know the standard drink sizes so you can count your drinks accurately. Measure drinks at home. Away from home, it can be hard to keep track, especially with mixed drinks, and at times you may be getting more alcohol than you think. With wine, you may need to ask the host or server not to "top off" a partially filled glass.

✓ **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. People who always stay within the low-risk limits when they drink have the lowest rates of alcohol-related problems.

✓ **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.

✓ **Include food.** Don't drink on an empty stomach. Eat some food so the alcohol will be absorbed into your system more slowly.

✓ **Find alternatives.** If drinking has occupied a lot of your time, then fill free time by developing new, healthy activities, hobbies and relationships, or renewing ones you've missed. If you have counted on alcohol to be more comfortable in social situations, manage moods or cope with problems, then seek other, healthy ways to deal with those areas of your life.

✓ **Avoid "triggers."** What triggers your urge to drink? If certain people or places make you drink even when you don't want to, try to avoid them. If certain activities, times of day or feelings trigger the urge, plan something else to do instead of drinking. If drinking at home is a problem, keep little or no alcohol there.

✓ **Plan to handle urges.** When you cannot avoid a trigger and an urge hits, consider these options: Remind yourself of your reasons for changing (it can help to carry them in writing or store them in an electronic message you can access easily). Or talk things through with someone you trust. Or get involved with a healthy, distracting activity, such as physical exercise or a hobby that doesn't involve drinking. Or, instead of fighting the feeling, accept it and ride it out without giving in, knowing that it will soon crest like a wave and pass.

✓ **Know your "no."** You're likely to be offered a drink at times when you don't want one. Have a polite, convincing "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.

## OHSU sets May 8 diabetes presentation

Oregon Health & Science University Physician Assistant Program will present "Diabetes Awareness - Understanding and Preventing Diabetes" from 3 to 4 p.m. Monday, May 8, in the Tribal Community Center, 9615 Grand Ronde Road.

Come explore the common causes, treatments and preventions of diabetes.

Presenters will discuss how to recognize your risk for diabetes, help your family and friends living with diabetes, and find out how you can prevent yourself from developing adult-onset diabetes.

Food and beverages will be provided. There will be an approximately 30-minute presentation with 10 minutes of question and answer.

For questions about this event, contact Tashina Blair, Charge Nurse/Diabetes Program coordinator, at the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center, 503-879-1392.

## Refill requests online

Web refill requests for prescriptions through the Tribal Pharmacy are now available! Go to [www.GrandRonde.org/departments/health-and-wellness/pharmacy](http://www.GrandRonde.org/departments/health-and-wellness/pharmacy) and click on the link provided.

You can bookmark this page for future use.

## Skookum denials

If you have received a denial from the Skookum Health Assistance Program for payment of health services and you feel that your services should not have been denied, please contact one of the Save

Our Skookum team members:

- Barbara Steere – 503-879-2487
- Melody Baker – 503-879-2011
- Tresa Mercier – 504-879-2008
- Tauni McCammon – 503-879-1406
- Erica Mercier – 503-879-2080

It is important that you call as soon as you receive a denial. The older bills are, the better chance of them being turned in to collections. You are always welcome to call with questions.

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Optometry hours

- 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
  - 9:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday
- Please call to schedule your appointment at 503-879-2079 or 800-775-0095.

**Now Available**  
**Diabetic**  
**Foot**  
**Care**  
 by trained  
 nursing staff

Call Medical today to  
 schedule an appointment  
 503-879-2002