

Safer Use Basics: Alcohol & Cannabis

Harm-reduction tips you can use right away. Choose what fits your goals: cutting back, staying safer, or pausing use.

General Safety

- Avoid driving or operating machinery while impaired.
- Use with people you trust and in a safe place.
- Avoid mixing with sedatives (benzodiazepines) or opioids—overdose risk increases.
- Keep products locked away from children and pets.
- If something feels off, seek help early.

Alcohol—Practical Tips

- Pace: spread drinks out; alternate alcohol with water or a non-alcoholic drink.
- Eat before and during; avoid drinking on an empty stomach.
- Set a limit before you start and stick to it; use a buddy to check in.
- Be cautious if taking medications—especially sedatives, sleep aids, or opioids.
- Know signs of alcohol poisoning: won't wake, slow/irregular breathing, bluish skin, vomiting while unconscious → call emergency services.

Cannabis—Practical Tips

- Start low, go slow. Especially with edibles—effects can take 1–2+ hours to peak.
- Avoid mixing with alcohol; the combination can increase impairment and nausea (“crossfading”).
- If smoking/vaping, take small puffs; avoid deep/held breaths to reduce lung irritation.
- Store products in original containers; label clearly and lock away.
- Delay driving until fully unimpaired.

If Things Go Sideways

- Hydrate, find a calm space, slow breathing, and consider light snacks.
- If someone can't be awakened, has trouble breathing, or has a seizure → call emergency services.

Informational only. Not medical advice. In the U.S., call 911 for emergencies or 988 for mental health crises.