

Reconsider your relationship with alcohol: health unit

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health is reaching out to drinkers who might overestimate the size of a single portion of alcohol. The health unit has launched a Rethink Your Drinking campaign to bring awareness to the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines developed by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. The campaign aims to change the way we think about experimenting with alcohol, according to a release by the health unit. It wants to build rhetoric on drinking that is universal across the province.

“People choose to drink alcohol for a number of reasons. Drinking is often tied to celebration, socialization and relaxation,” Stephanie MacDonald a public health nurse said in the release. “But, we want to challenge people to consider their relationship with alcohol, including why, when, and how much they're really drinking.”

According to the guidelines, a single beer or cooler should be 12 ounces at five per cent alcohol. A glass of wine is five ounces at 12 per cent alcohol. A shot is 1.5 ounces at 40 per cent alcohol. Each counts as a drink. Women should have no more than two drinks a day without exceeding 10 drinks a week. Men should have no more than three drinks a day without exceeding 15 drinks a week. Women shouldn't exceed three drinks and men shouldn't exceed four drinks in one sitting.

The health unit says that alcohol is a socially accepted part of everyday life – around 80 per cent of Canadians drink. It said many people exceed recommended drinking guidelines putting themselves at risk for short- and long-term alcohol related harms. People can keep their eye out for standard drink challenge booths at LCBOs across the county by public health. They'll run throughout the month. The challenge booth will be at the Bancroft LCBO Feb. 28 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Also watch for #DrinkFreeHPE to participate in the challenge to cut out or back on alcohol consumption. To participate, share your experience via Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag. The health unit released that there is a chance to win prizes.

The guidelines recommend planning non-drinking days to avoid developing a habit.

More on the campaign can be found at www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca or more on standard drinks can be found at www.ccsa.ca.