

# DRY JANUARY: HOW REDUCING ALCOHOL CAN SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



Every January, millions of people choose to pause or reduce their alcohol intake for what has become known as Dry January. While it may sound like a health trend, this monthlong break can offer meaningful benefits, especially for older adults who may already be managing chronic health conditions, medications, or changes in mood.

We support older adults in strengthening their mental and emotional well-being. Taking time to reflect on alcohol use can be a helpful step in starting the new year with clarity, balance, and improved health.

## **Why Alcohol Affects Adults Differently With Age**

As we get older, our bodies process alcohol more slowly. This means the same amount of alcohol can have a stronger effect than it used to. Many older adults also take prescription medications that can interact negatively with alcohol. Even moderate drinking may increase the risk of falls, confusion, sleep disruptions, or changes in mood.

For adults who are already navigating depression or anxiety, alcohol can make symptoms worse. Alcohol temporarily numbs feelings, but when it wears off the brain often rebounds with more sadness, irritability, or worry.

***See the next page for more.***



## Mental Health Benefits of a Month Without Alcohol

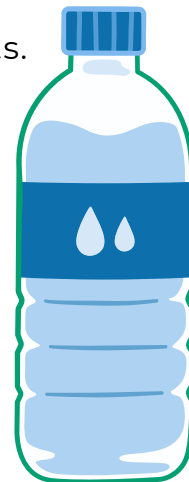
Taking a break from drinking, even for a few weeks, can provide real benefits.

**Clearer thinking and improved mood.** Many people notice sharper focus, more stable moods, and fewer feelings of sadness or nervousness.

**Better sleep.** Alcohol may help someone fall asleep at first, but it often causes restless sleep. Dry January can help reset sleep patterns.

**More energy.** With better sleep and fewer alcohol-related side effects, people often feel more energetic and present in their daily lives.

**Less loneliness.** Alcohol can sometimes worsen isolation. Choosing Dry January creates opportunities for healthier routines and social connections.



## How to Try Dry January in a Safe and Realistic Way

If you are considering Dry January, start with small steps.

**Talk with your provider.** If you drink heavily or daily, speak with a medical professional before stopping. They can help you decide the safest plan.

**Create a support system.** Tell a trusted friend or family member about your goal. Check in with them regularly.

**Replace the routine.** If you usually unwind with a drink, try tea, sparkling water, a warm bath, or a calming activity.

**Track how you feel.** Notice any changes in sleep, mood, or anxiety. Even small improvements can be encouraging.

**Be patient with yourself.** Progress does not require perfection. Every alcohol-free day supports your well-being.

## When to Reach Out for Extra Support

If cutting back feels difficult or brings up strong emotions, you are not alone. Many people lean on alcohol during stressful seasons of life, especially after major changes, health challenges, or the loss of a loved one.

Our program offers a safe place for older adults experiencing depression, anxiety, or emotional distress. If you or someone you know could benefit from extra support, contact us at the number below to learn more about how we can help.

**Will you be trying Dry  
January this year?**

**Yes**

☐

**No**

☐

## **WE CAN HELP.**

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

**Call us today at**