

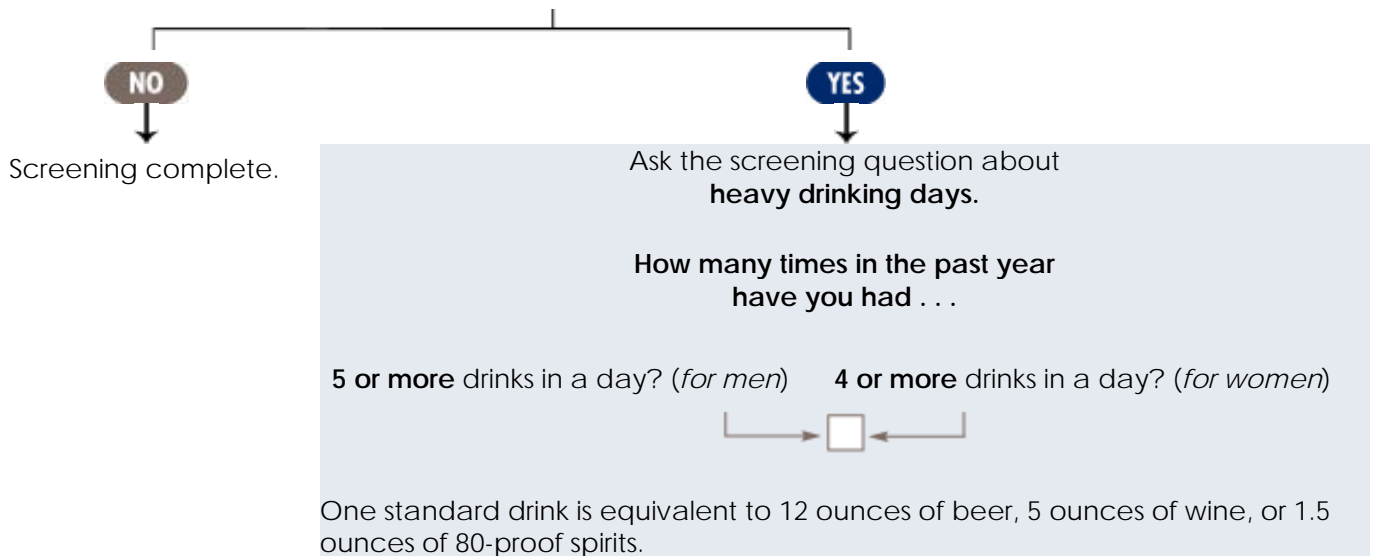
The CAGE Alcohol Misuse Screen and Brief Intervention Guide¹

DIRECTIONS

Step I: Screen for Alcohol Misuse

A quick way to screen patients you think may be abusing alcohol requires asking this question annually:

Prescreen: Do you sometimes drink beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages?



Go to the following link for standard drink equivalents:

http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/CliniciansGuide2005/clinicians_guide13_p_mats.htm

Step II: If preliminary screen is positive, then probe with the CAGE questions.

- Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
- Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (**E**ye opener)?

Assess for

- Medical problems *blackouts; depression; hypertension; trauma; abdominal pain; liver dysfunction; sexual problems; sleep disorders*
- Laboratory *elevated LFTs; elevated MCV*
- Behavioral problems *work; family; school; accidents, legal*
- Alcohol Dependence *3+ on CAGE or one or more of: compulsion to drink; impaired control; withdrawal symptoms; increased tolerance; relief drinking*

Plan of action based on the severity of the condition

- ✓ Remain engaged in care of the patient by addressing medical issues as needed and supporting the patient's commitment to the treatment process.
- ✓ Educate the patient and, with permission, significant other/s and family about the nature of addiction, the effectiveness of treatment, and the prospects for recovery.
- ✓ Consider referring the patient to an addiction medicine specialist for formal assessment and development of a treatment plan which is integrated/coordinated with primary care treatment team.

¹The American Society of Addiction Medicine recommends asking questions about consumption with use of the **CAGE questionnaire** as an efficient and valid method to screen for patients at risk for alcohol misuse.