

Walk and Talk - Alcohol and Cancer Risk: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory

Medical Assistant Script

The walk from the waiting room to the exam room is an opportunity for medical assistants to “walk and talk” with patients. Here is a script that shows how a medical assistant can educate patients about the unique ways that alcohol can impact the risk of cancer.

Background:

In 2025, the U.S. Surgeon General shared an advisory regarding the link between alcohol consumption and an increased risk of cancer. Alcohol is a leading preventable cause of cancer, but according to the report, public understanding of alcohol consumption as a cancer risk has not improved in decades. Based on the findings, 741,300 cancer cases worldwide were attributable to alcohol consumption in 2020. Understanding how and why alcohol consumption can be connected to increased risk for cancer is valuable for patients and those in the medical field.

Medical Assistant: • calls patient from the waiting room•

Patient: *walks back to hallway*

Medical Assistant: Hi, how have you been?

Patient: Not too bad.

Medical Assistant: Glad to hear it! I wanted to give you this card about alcohol and cancer risk. You may have heard that the U.S. Surgeon General recently shared a report that highlighted the evidence connecting drinking alcohol and higher risk of cancer. The report found that each year about 100,000 cancer cases and 20,000 cancer deaths were attributed to alcohol use. However, many people are not aware that drinking alcohol increases cancer risk, so we're sharing this card to offer more information and resources. If you have questions or are concerned about how alcohol is affecting your health, please talk with your doctor. There are also tips and resources on the back of the card. *hands postcard with graphic to patient*

Patient: Okay, thanks. Good to know.

Medical Assistant: No problem!



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