**Step 1A: Ask the quantity-frequency questions**

**Weekly Average**

Multiply the answers to the following two questions.
- On average, how many days a week do you drink alcohol?
- On a typical day when you drink, how many drinks do you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASK</th>
<th>IF THE ANSWER IS</th>
<th>THEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Men</td>
<td>From Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 14</td>
<td>more than 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the maximum number of drinks you had on any given day in the past month?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below the cutoffs?
If so, screening can stop here unless patients who drink are (1) pregnant or trying to conceive (they need advice to abstain) or (2) over age 65, frail, or taking medications that interact with alcohol (they may have problems at lower drinking levels and thus may need advice to cut down; see Step 3). Other drinkers below the cutoffs may benefit from reminders that no drinking level is risk free and any drinking can impair driving tasks.

**Step 1B: Ask the CAGE questions**

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

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” then ask “Has this occurred during the past year?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF THE ANSWER IS</th>
<th>THEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES to 3 or 4 questions in the past year</td>
<td>Your patient may be alcohol dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES to 1 or 2 questions in the past year</td>
<td>Your patient may have current alcohol-related problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO to all questions</td>
<td>Your patient may still be at risk because of the elevated drinking level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2: Assess**
- Dependence indicators
- Medical factors
- Behavioral factors
- Family history

**Step 3: Advise and assist**
- State your concern
- Give your advice
- Gauge patient’s readiness to change
- Negotiate an action plan
  - for cutting down: recommend lower limits; set a drinking goal
  - for abstaining: refer to an alcohol treatment center (To find local centers, call 1-800-662-HELP or visit http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov.)

**Step 4: Arrange followup**
- Make plans to monitor patient progress
What is a standard drink?

A standard drink contains about 14 grams (about 0.6 fluid ounces) of pure alcohol. Below are approximate standard drink equivalents.

- 12 oz. of beer or cooler
- 8–9 oz. of malt liquor
- 5 oz. of table wine
- 3–4 oz. of fortified wine (such as sherry or port)
- 2–3 oz. of cordial, liqueur, or aperitif
- 1.5 oz. of brandy (a single jigger)
- 1.5 oz. of spirits (a single jigger of 80-proof gin, vodka, whiskey, etc.)

Note: People buy many of these drinks in containers that hold multiple standard drinks. For example, malt liquor is often sold in 16-, 22-, or 40-oz. containers that hold between two and five standard drinks, and table wine is typically sold in 25 oz. (750 ml.) bottles that hold five standard drinks.