

What's a RAAM clinic?

Rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinics are drop-in clinics for people looking for help with their substance use. The people working at these clinics know how difficult it is to ask for help. **You don't need an**



appointment to attend this clinic – just show up during clinic hours with your health card.

Your history

The clinic team will begin by asking you about your history of alcohol use: when you started drinking, how much and how frequently you drink, and so on. The point of these questions is not to make you feel guilty or defensive, but to get a complete picture of you in order to determine how to help you. Try to remember the clinic team is not there to judge you, and will be most able to treat you if you're **completely open** about your drinking.

Your diagnosis

Based on your history, the RAAM clinic team will provide you with a diagnosis. If you sometimes drink more than is recommended but are often able to drink moderately, do not suffer serious social harms from drinking, and do not go through withdrawal when you stop drinking, the team may determine that you are an **at-risk drinker**. On the other hand, if you often avoid your responsibilities due to drinking, have trouble drinking moderately, continue to drink even when you know it's a bad idea, and go through withdrawal when you stop drinking, the team may diagnose you with an **alcohol use disorder**. Both of these conditions are **treatable**.



Advice

Many people who have to go to the hospital for a drinking-related problem have gotten injured as a result of drinking too much. In these cases, the RAAM clinic team will provide you with advice on how to make choices that will minimize the risks of intoxication, such as tips on how to pace your drinking and situations to avoid.

Counselling

The RAAM clinic team may refer you to counselling as part of your treatment. Counselling programs can include education on alcohol and healthy lifestyle choice, group and individual therapy sessions, help with developing coping skills, cognitive behavioural therapy, and peer support groups. The team will work with you to determine what form of counselling would be most helpful for you.

Medication



If you're struggling with alcohol cravings, the clinic team may suggest

that you try an **anti-craving medication**, like naltrexone, that will help to lessen these cravings, as well as the withdrawal symptoms that may accompany your early days of sobriety. Medication usually makes other types of treatment much more effective and reduces the risk of relapse. These medications are safe, effective, and non-addictive.

Bring support

If you're feeling anxious or hesitant about going to the RAAM clinic, consider bringing a supportive person with you. Changing your drinking habits can be very difficult, and having someone with you while you speak to the team may make you feel less overwhelmed and less alone.



<http://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/METAPHI/>

Toronto RAAM Clinics

Problematic Alcohol Use: Your options for treatment

St. Joseph's Health Centre Tues & Thurs 10:00–11:30



30 The Queensway, Ground Floor
416-530-6486 ext. 3969

Women's College Hospital Mon, Tues, & Thurs 10:00–12:00



76 Grenville St., 3rd Floor
416-323-7559 ext. 6

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre Wed 2:00–4:00



2075 Bayview Avenue, Room B6 34
416-480-6100 ext. 6736

St. Michael's Hospital Mon, Wed, & Fri 9:00–11:00



30 Bond St., 17th Floor, Cardinal Carter
Wing
416-864-3082

Toronto Western Hospital Mon & Wed 9:00–11:00



399 Bathurst St., Ground Floor, West Wing,
WW1-414
416-603-2581 (main switchboard)

St. Michael's Hospital Family Health Team Wed 12:00–4:00 (pregnant patients only)



St. James Town Health Centre
410 Sherbourne St., Ground Floor
416-864-3082

What's the big deal?

According to recent studies, about 80% of Canadians drink alcohol. It's legal, it's easy to get, and it's part of our culture. But when your alcohol use leads to a hospital visit, **it's a sign that drinking is causing problems in your life.**

It can be very difficult to accept that your alcohol use is problematic, and it's normal to feel ashamed, frightened, or angry. But the good news is that medical treatment for problematic alcohol use is **safe** and **effective**. This pamphlet contains information about the treatment options you'll be offered at the rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinic to help you manage your drinking.