

## Self Diagnosis continued....

If you answered yes to two or more of the questions, you are probably already alcoholic. Call your company's Employee's Assistance Program for a confidential evaluation, or go to an outside professional in the field of alcoholism. This is the same importance as an "oil" warning light is in the cockpit, or an abnormal PSA is for cancer. Do not ignore it. Treatment is always more successful if started early.

Pilots who receive a diagnosis of alcoholism from a medical doctor are able to return to flying after demonstrating continuous sobriety through the FAA's Human Intervention and Motivation program. Contact your company's Employee Assistance Program and they will help you. If your company does not have a program established, one can be created for you through the FAA. Hundreds of pilots have returned to the cockpit through this program.

**Being a potential alcoholic and taking the steps to prevent the condition from being activated is not the same as alcohol abuse or dependency.**

**There is no need to check yes in the box about alcohol abuse on your FAA medical application unless you have been medically diagnosed.**



**This pamphlet prepared by  
Birds Of A Feather  
[www.BOAF.org](http://www.BOAF.org)**



**What every  
pilot should  
know about  
alcoholism.**

If you drink alcohol and are reading this, the odds are 1 in 10 that you are predisposed to alcoholism. Alcoholism is an equal opportunity disease. Being a pilot, earning a good income or having high moral values- these do not lower your chances.

Some people are able to counter their diabetes by controlling their diet. And people predisposed to heart disease can lower their cholesterol as prevention. Likewise, active alcoholism can be controlled, or forestalled by early detection and treatment. Unfortunately, unlike diabetes and heart disease, as alcoholism progresses it affects the mind, making it harder to self-diagnose. Hence early detection and prevention are paramount.

If you are predisposed to this illness there are steps you can take to insure you do not cross over into active alcoholism.

**The first step is self-diagnosis.**

While normally a large amount of alcohol is required to activate the disease, the quantity of alcohol consumed is a poor diagnostic tool. This is because alcoholism is more a factor of how a person is affected by alcohol than the quantity consumed. Many doctors find the following four questions a better indicator.

1. Have you ever decided you would like to cut back or slow down your drinking?
2. Has anyone ever complained about your drinking or ask you to cut back?  
(This would include the police giving you a warning or DUI)
3. Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking or about something you did while under the influence of alcohol?
4. Have you ever taken an "eye opener" drink, or any other remedy to sooth the effects of your previous night's drinking?

If you answered yes to one of the above questions, you are at risk of being alcoholic. Do some more investigation-

Try to maintain the 0-1-2-3 rules of thumb for safe, normal drinking as recommended by the US Army. This is: 0 drinks if you are driving, 1 drink per hour if socializing, 2 nights social drinking per week and not more than 3 drinks on any one night. If you are unable to drink like this or find this style of drinking irritating, you need to take some more action.

Simply put, IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR DRINKING AND ENJOY YOURSELF AT THE SAME TIME YOU ARE A POTENTIAL ALCOHOLIC.

## IF YOU ARE A POTENTIAL ALCOHOLIC

- 1) Get more information.
  - A. Attend an AA meeting. Call the number in your area for times and directions
  - B. Read the book "Alcoholics Anonymous"
  - C. Visit candidly with a sober alcoholic pilot. Go to [www.BOAF.org](http://www.BOAF.org) for contacts.
- 2) Stop drinking, or limit your consumption. Only drink as much as alcohol as your liver can process. For a 170 lb man, this is one drink an hour. For potential alcoholics, metabolizing excessive alcohol causes neurological damage that leads to addiction.
- 3) Make a back up plan. Write a list of the things you would never intend to do while drinking. Make a personal contract that if you ever do these things you will get help. Share this information with your spouse, or someone who cares about you. Give them permission to act on your behalf if you do not.