

ALCOHOL AND HEALTH

Alcohol consumption can have long-term impacts on an individual's health. Nearly 1 in 13 West Australians drink every day, and almost 1 in 4 drink at levels likely to cause harm and illness in their lifetime.

Alcohol-related disease and ill-health is often associated with 'heavy drinking', but anyone that regularly drinks more than **2 standard drinks per day is at higher risk of longer term health conditions.**

There are a significant number of alcohol-related diseases and health problems caused by regular and ongoing drinking, including:

- Cancer (bowel, breast, throat, mouth, liver)
- Liver disease
- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE

A confidential and non-judgemental helpline for anyone seeking assistance with alcohol or other drug use is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: (08) 9442 5000 (calls from mobiles may incur a higher charge)

Country toll-free: 1800 198 024

Email: adis@health.wa.gov.au

For more information and to assess whether your drinking is putting you at risk of alcohol-related harm, visit alcoholthinkagain.com.au

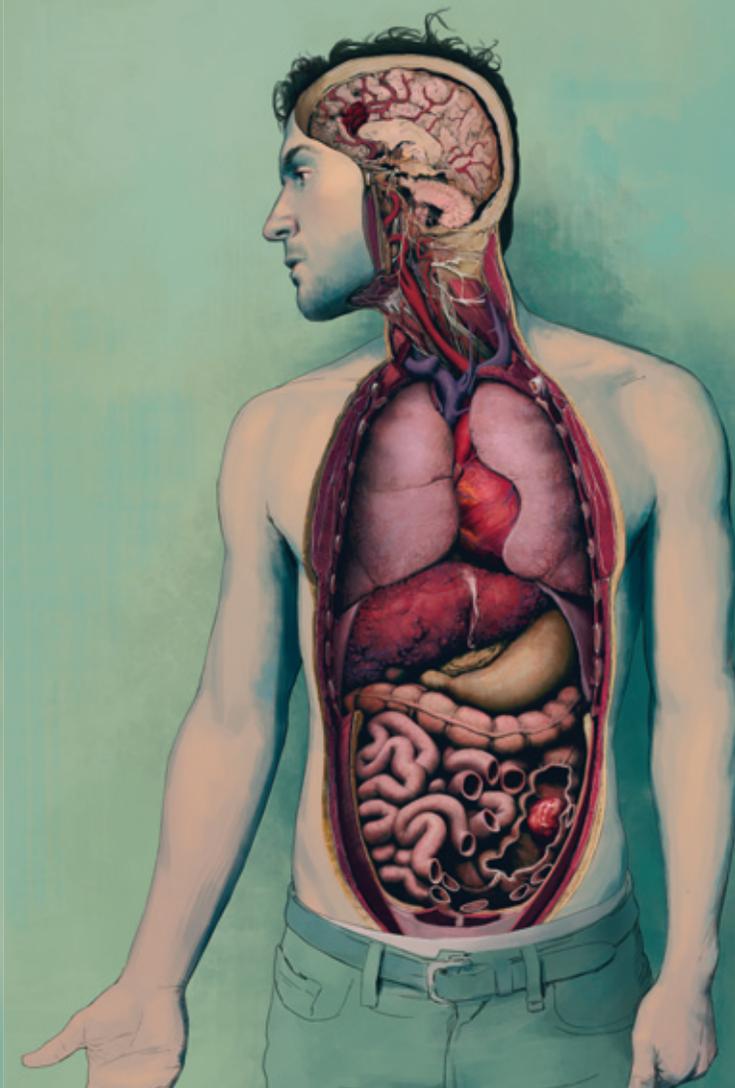
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Government of Western Australia
Drug and Alcohol Office

DAO 00101

Alcohol and your health.



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CANCER

Cancer is a disease of the body's cells. Sometimes, cells can reproduce themselves in an uncontrolled way, which can lead to cancer. A number of lifestyle risk factors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, UV radiation, being physically inactive or inheriting a faulty gene can cause cells to change. These abnormal cells may grow into a lump that is called a tumour.

Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen. This is the highest carcinogen rating, which includes other cancer causing agents like tobacco smoke and asbestos. Alcohol-related cancer can develop in many different parts of the body, including:

- Head and neck cancers (oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus)
- Stomach
- Liver
- Bowel (colon, colorectal)
- Female breast.

LIVER DISEASE

Alcohol metabolism (digestion) mainly takes place in the liver, and results in acetaldehyde and corresponding isoenzymes. Acetaldehyde is toxic and destroys liver cells. It's involved in alcoholic liver disease and alcohol related cancers, and can lead to these four diseases of the liver:

- Fatty liver
- Alcoholic hepatitis
- Alcoholic cirrhosis
- Cancer.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Alcohol can affect the cardiovascular system. Just one or two drinks can alter heart rate, blood pressure, the effectiveness of the heart muscles, the amount of blood pumped, and blood flow to regions of the body.

Drinking large amounts of alcohol, both regularly and irregularly, can affect the structure of the heart and how it functions. Alcohol raises blood pressure and triglycerides which can lead to cardiovascular complications, including:

- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Arrhythmia
- Dilated cardiomyopathy
- Congestive heart failure or chronic heart failure
- Stroke.

The World Health Organisation and other key groups recommend that people do not drink alcohol for health benefits, as there is no merit in promoting alcohol consumption as a preventative strategy for cardiovascular disease.

STROKE

Stroke is when an artery in the brain becomes blocked, or bleeds. This results in the blood supply being disrupted in the brain. Alcohol consumption increases the risk of both ischaemic strokes (when an artery supplying blood to the brain becomes blocked) and haemorrhagic strokes (when an artery supplying blood to the brain bleeds).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare advise that stroke is preventable. Reducing modifiable risky behaviours, such as alcohol consumption, could prevent many strokes.

WHAT IS A STANDARD DRINK?

It is important to understand what a standard drink is so that when you are drinking you can manage how much alcohol you consume. This can help you stick to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines which recommend, **drinking no more than 2 standard drinks on any day reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.**

In Australia, a standard drink is any drink containing 10 grams of alcohol, regardless of container size or alcohol type (e.g beer, wine, spirit).

Alcoholic beverages are sold and served in many different sized containers. Different types of beverages contain different amounts of alcohol, and glass sizes are often not the same. A glass or container can hold more than one standard drink of alcohol. This can make it difficult to know how many standard drinks you consume. Using standard drinks to measure your alcohol consumption is more accurate than counting the number of glasses or other containers you have consumed.

If you are drinking packaged liquor, the number of standard drinks should be written on the side of the beverage container.

WHAT DOES A STANDARD DRINK LOOK LIKE?



285 ml
of full strength beer
(4.8% alc. vol)
1.1 standard drinks



150 ml
of champagne
(12% alc. vol)
1.4 standard drinks



425 ml
full strength beer
(4.8% alc. vol)
1.6 standard drinks



100 ml
of wine
(red - 13% alc. vol)
(white - 11.5% alc. vol)
1 standard drink



30 ml
of spirits
(40% alc. vol)
1 standard drink



150 ml of wine
(red - 13% alc. vol)
1.6 standard drinks
(white - 11.5% alc. vol)
1.4 standard drinks

Source: National Health and Medical Research Council