



Alcohol and cancer risk

Alcohol is a drug that can be toxic and addictive. When it comes to cancer risk, evidence suggests that there is no safe limit of alcohol consumption.

How much alcohol you drink is your choice, but drinking is never risk-free. Alcohol can also contribute to weight gain, which also is a risk factor for some cancers. The more alcohol you drink the more you increase the risk of developing some cancers.

Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of developing certain cancers. These include cancer of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, breast and bowel.

NHMRC Guidelines

To reduce your risk when you drink alcohol, follow the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.

These guidelines provide you with evidence-based advice on the health effects of drinking alcohol. It will help you make an informed decision about how much alcohol to drink, if any.

Adults

To reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury, healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week, and no more than four standard drinks on any one day.

The less you choose to drink, the lower your risk of harm from alcohol. For some people, not drinking at all is the safest option.

Children and people under 18 years of age

To reduce the risk of injury and other harms to health, children and young people under 18 years of age should not drink any alcohol.

Pregnant women

To reduce the risk of harm to their unborn child, women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink any alcohol. For women who are breastfeeding, not drinking is safest for their baby.



What is a standard drink?

An Australian standard drink contains 10 grams of any type of alcohol.

Check out the label to find out the number of standard drinks in the bottle or can.

A standard drink can look different depending on the type of alcohol

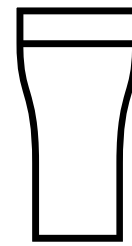
A standard drink by alcohol type:

- 100 mL wine (1 bottle = 7.5 standard drinks)
- 285 mL (1 pot) of full-strength beer
- 375 mL (can/stubbie) of mid strength beer
- 425 mL (1 schooner) of low alcohol beer
- 30 mL (1 shot glass) of spirits
- 60 mL (2 shot glasses) of sherry
- Cocktails are often made up of number of different spirits and liqueurs. They can contain more than three standard drinks. Ask the bartender how many standard drinks are in your cocktail.

Each of these represents one standard drink



100mL serve of wine



250mL full strength beer



30mL spirit nip



Reducing Your Cancer Risk

Have no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than four standard drinks on any one day.

- **Some tips to reduce your alcohol consumption**
- Count your standard drinks – keep track of how much alcohol you consume.
- Dilute alcoholic drinks:
 - > make a wine spritzer (wine and soda water)
 - > or a shandy (beer and lemonade)
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks e.g., a mocktail instead of a cocktail
- Pace yourself. Have a non-alcoholic drink or water in between drinks
- Choose drinks with a low or no alcohol content, such as light beer
- Drink slowly. Take sips and put your glass down between sips
- Don't allow people to top up your drinks
- Set yourself a limit before going out and stick to it
- If going out with friends, offer to be the designated driver
- Challenge your friends to an alcohol-free month – sign up for Dry July
- Think of activities you can do with your friends that don't involve drinking, e.g. movies, shopping, hiking.

Alcohol, body weight and cancer

Alcoholic drinks represent 'empty kilojoules'. They are high in kilojoules but low in nutritional value, especially when added to sugary drinks. Drinking alcohol can lead to weight gain. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of certain cancers. These include cancers of the oesophagus, pancreas, bowel, endometrium, kidney, and breast (in post-menopausal women).

Alcohol, smoking and cancer

The combined effect of smoking and drinking alcohol increases cancer risk, especially cancers of the upper digestive tract (mouth, throat, oesophagus and stomach).

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