

HOW MUCH CAN I DRINK?

How much you can drink, while staying in control and protecting your health, depends on a number of things.

People are affected differently by alcohol depending on their gender, size, age, and ethnicity. Even how tired you are, the mood you are in, and any medication you're taking can influence the way your body responds to alcohol. The two best things you can do to make sure you stay sociable and safe while you're drinking is stick to the one-an-hour rule, and slow down or stop if you start saying and doing things you wouldn't normally do. You can find some other handy hints on how to do this in our Survivors' Guide to Going Out.

Safe and Social

1

Keep your count at one per hour. A single standard drink is what your body can happily process every hour.

Nice one New Zealand!

Did you know that 78% of New Zealanders aged 16 and over drink sociably and safely! Keep it that way by counting and spacing your drinks, and having a couple of alcohol free days each week.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

2

Quality over quantity. It's safer to drink small quantities regularly, than large quantities occasionally.



We're a social lot...

Alcohol is a great social lubricant - 64% of us drink with family, 38% with friends, and 8% with our workmates.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

Heart happy

Research shows that regular, light alcohol consumption increases HDL cholesterol and reduces the risk of death from cardiovascular disease.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

3

Make the party last with some good food and a few non-alcoholic or low alcohol drinks. Master a great mocktail recipe, become the queen/king of the spritzer, and know what low-alcohol beers you like.



4

Drink like there is a tomorrow. By drinking less on an occasion you reduce your risk of having some sort of accident. By drinking less over time, you can also help reduce your risk of negative health impacts.

Keep your cleavage

Women who drink have an increased risk of developing breast cancer, and men and women drinkers have an increased risk of developing cancer of the oesophagus.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

Keep your marbles

There's also some research to suggest that light to moderate drinking is associated with reduced risk of dementia.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

5

Once you've had a few you're less likely to make good decisions. Think about how you want your night to shape up, and what you've got on the next day, before you start drinking and stick to your plan.



The big C

There is growing research to suggest that drinking is associated with an increased risk of developing cancers of the colon, bowel, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx and liver.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

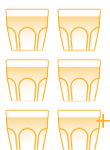
Everything in balance

You should think about alcohol in the context of your overall diet. It has more silica than milk and fewer calories than orange juice, but drink too much and the risks will outweigh any benefits.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

6+

By now you'd be losing count! If you've crammed this amount then it's time to take a break, drink some water and track down some decent food.



Where are those legs taking you?

If you can't recall your previous night's drinking then you may have suffered an alcohol-induced 'grey-out'. This is when you're awake but out of control - as close as you'll get to being an actual zombie - and possibly just one step away from the grave.

SAFE AND SOCIAL

Ping = pong

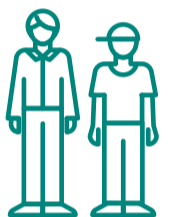
If your body can't keep up with your drinking then it'll start to freak out, serving you curve balls such as smelly odours, bloodshot eyes, blurred vision and slurred speech.



SAFE AND SOCIAL

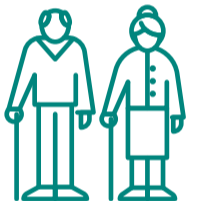
Size counts

If you're drinking next to someone larger than you, the same amount of alcohol will probably affect you more because you've got less body tissue to absorb it. People with more fat in their body also take longer to process alcohol because fat isn't water soluble, so it's slow to absorb alcohol.



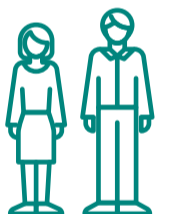
Age matters

Your body's ability to process alcohol decreases with age. This is because your body's water content decreases, which means there's a higher concentration of alcohol in your blood.



Women get by with less

Drink for drink, women end up with more alcohol in their blood than men. This is because women are generally smaller than men, have proportionately less body water and more body fat (which is slow to absorb alcohol).



Where are you from?

People of European descent produce more ADH, the enzyme that metabolizes alcohol, than people of other ethnicities. So if you're not of European descent, you'll feel the effects of alcohol more than someone who is.



To find out more about alcohol and how it affects your body and mind, check our website and have a read of our "What's going on inside" article.