

# **Alcohol recommendations**

To reduce the risk of alcohol-related disease, injury or death, the National Guidelines for Alcohol Consumption recommend:

- No more than 2 standard drinks per day for healthy men and women.
- No more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion.
- Avoiding alcohol when pregnant or breastfeeding.

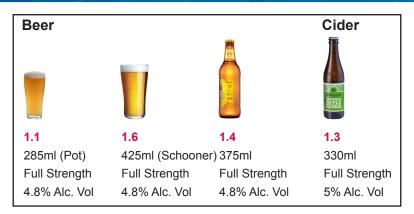
A standard drink contains 10g of alcohol and is approximately equal to:

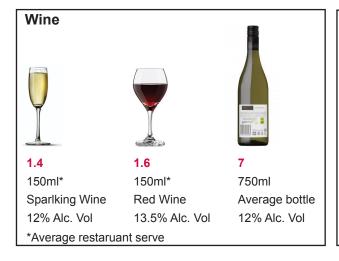
■ 100ml wine OR 285ml full strength beer OR 30ml spirits.

In Australia, the number of standard drinks in a can, stubbie or bottle is indicated on the label.



# How many standard drinks are in a typical serve?







### **Know the risks**

Too much alcohol can increase the risk of:

- accidents and injury
- high triglyceride levels
- liver and pancreas damage
- dementia and brain damage
- high blood pressure and heart disease
- some cancers.

#### Alcohol can also:

- Affect concentration, mood and sleep.
- Interact with a range of medications.
- Contribute to weight gain, due to the high energy (kJ) value of all alcoholic drinks.

Depending on your individual health and medication, less than 2 standard drinks per day may be recommended. Discuss this with your health professional.

# Tips to help reduce alcohol

- Quench your thirst with chilled water or a diet soft drink instead of alcohol.
- Sip alcohol slowly with a meal or wait until after a meal to consume alcohol.
- Alternate alcoholic beverages with non-alcoholic beverages.
- Choose 'Light' or 'Low-alcohol' beer instead of regular strength beer.
- Be aware that 'low-carb' drinks often have the same alcohol content as regular varieties.
- Choose a pot (285mls) of beer or cider rather than a schooner (425mls) or stein (570mls).
- Order wine by the glass instead of ordering a bottle.
- Be cautious of the volume of larger wine glasses.
- Finish one drink before ordering another and avoid 'topping up' your glass while drinking.
- Choose a wine spritz (wine diluted with soda water).
- Set a limit on the number of drinks you plan to have before you start drinking.
- Offer to be a designated driver.
- Participate in FebFast, Dry July or October campaigns (fast from alcohol and raise money for a charity)







Wine spritz



Soda water





Diet soft drink







#### How can alcohol affect diabetes?

Hypoglycaemia (blood glucose level less than 4.0mmol/L)

If you are managing diabetes with insulin or tables that may cause hypoglycaemia, your risk of hypoglycaemia may be further increased with alcohol.

**Hyperglycaemia** (blood glucose level above 8.0mmol/L)

Alcoholic drinks that are higher in carbohydrate (e.g. dessert style sweet wines, beer, cider and spirits mixed with regular soft drink or fruit juice) may cause higher blood glucose levels.

# Tips for safer alcohol consumption when managing diabetes

These tips are most relevant to people managing diabetes with insulin or tablets that may cause hypoglycaemia.

- Ensure you consume alcohol with a meal or snack containing carbohydrate, not on an empty stomach. Discuss carbohydrate choices with your Dietitian.
- Always carry hypoglycaemia treatment with you (e.g. jelly beans) in case you need to treat low blood glucose levels.
- Wear or carry identification that states you have diabetes. Make sure someone you are with knows that you have diabetes, including how to identify and treat hypoglycaemia.
- Physical activity such as dancing or drinking alcohol after playing sport may further increase your risk of having a hypo. If you are planning on being physically active you may need to consume additional carbohydrate or reduce your insulin dose. Discuss this with your diabetes specialist or diabetes educator.
- Test your blood glucose levels before going to bed.
  - ✓ If your blood glucose level is below 7.0mmol/L, include a lower glycaemic index (GI) carbohydrate snack before bed to help prevent hypoglycaemia occurring overnight (e.g. a slice of grain toast or a piece or fruit or a muesli bar).
  - ✓ If you are on insulin and your blood glucose level is low, consider adjusting long acting insulin. Discuss this with your diabetes specialist or diabetes educator.
  - ✓ If you are on insulin and your blood glucose level is high, consider taking extra insulin. Discuss this with your diabetes specialist or diabetes educator.

#### More information

www.alcohol.gov.au www.drinkwise.org.au

## **Support**

If you have difficulty controlling your alcohol intake, speak to your treating health professional. A variety of support services are available across Australia.



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