Alcohol



Introduction

Starting the journey to understand alcohol entails not only the curiosity to learn but also the responsibility to be aware of its effects and the safety precautions one should follow. In any situation regarding immediate health or safety of someone consuming alcohol, it’s imperative to call Triple Zero (000).

Understanding Alcohol

Knowing the facts about alcohol and how it may impact your body and mind can help you make better decisions about drinking, or help you choose whether or not you want to drink at all.

Alcohol can affect different people in different ways. It can depend on how much you drink, how quickly you drink it, your size and weight, and your gender.

It can also depend on how good your general health is, how healthy your liver is, where you drink, whether you drink alone, whether you use alcohol with other drugs including medications and if there is a family history of alcohol and other drug dependence.

What is a standard drink?

The definition of a standard drink is 10g of alcohol but the serving size can look very different depending on multiple factors: the type of alcohol, its strength, and the size of the glass. Your Room's standard drinks calculator is a handy tool to get a clearer understanding—it might be more challenging than you anticipate.

Reducing Risks

Knowing the Effects of Alcohol

A comprehensive understanding of how alcohol impacts both your body and mind is crucial. It aids in making informed decisions about drinking. Resources like Your Room and Reach Out provide detailed insights on the effects of alcohol and binge drinking respectively.

Getting Professional Advice

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking habits, you should talk to a doctor, youth worker, or health service. They provide a starting point to tackle the issue. You can also call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) NSW on 1800 250 015. ADIS is a 24/7 information, support and referral line for those affected by alcohol and other drug use. You can find more information on the Your Room website.

`https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jNEVGj6gS0`

Alcohol-Related Emergencies

The signs of alcohol-related emergencies range from being unable to wake someone up to severe vomiting or if they have irregular breathing or have stopped breathing. Always call Triple Zero (000) if you see these signs. It's also crucial to tell the paramedics about what the person has taken (alcohol and/or drugs) so they

get the right help.

Signs of an alcohol-related emergency:

- If you can't wake someone up.
- If they are vomiting a lot or they can't stop vomiting.
- If they have an injury or have hit their head from a fall.
- If you think their drink has been 'spiked'—this means they could be incoherent (not making sense), unable to stand up, or falling in and out of consciousness.
- If they are not breathing regularly or have stopped breathing.

The paramedics are there to help. The right information is important and could save someone's life.

> *If you or someone else is unsafe, seriously unwell or hurt in any way call triple zero (000) immediately.*

Tips for responsible drinking

Know your facts

Know what the impacts are on your mind and body. Know what a standard drink is and how many standard drinks are in commonly used bottles, glasses or cans (it's probably more than you expect). Most drinks that you buy from a bar or club have more than one standard drink of alcohol in them. A standard pour of a glass of white wine, for example, is approximately 150ml which is around 1.5 standard drinks.

Plan with your mates before you drink

Talk to your friends about what you would do if something goes wrong. Make a plan for what to do if someone gets lost, drinks too much or looks like they have had their drink spiked. Chat about your options and make that decision together before you start drinking.

Mates look after mates

Always look after your mates when you're drinking. Stick with friends who you trust. If a situation feels wrong, the best option is to leave and go somewhere that you do feel safe.

Look out for drink spiking

Drink spiking happens when someone puts something (extra alcohol or a drug) in a person's drink without their knowledge or consent. This causes the person to become sleepy, sick, or appear very drunk – even when they haven't had much to drink. A person who has had their drink spiked is vulnerable. If you think you or your friend have had your drink spiked you need to go to a safe place and ask a friend to stay with you. If you are out, tell security or any staff what has happened. If someone passes out from drink spiking call Triple Zero (000).

> *Drink spiking is serious and illegal. To prevent drink spiking, it may be best to watch your drink, avoid sharing drinks, buy/pour your own drink and don't accept drinks from people you don't know well or trust.*

Know when to help

If you feel unwell, unsafe, or like you need support always ask for help from someone you trust. If someone has had an injury, have hit their head, or can't be woken up call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Sobering Up

Getting the alcohol out of your body or 'sobering up' takes time, nothing can speed up this process. Injuries and other health concerns can happen when people attempt to sober themselves or someone else up.

> *Ten per cent of the alcohol in your body leaves in your breath, sweat and urine, but most is broken down by the liver. The liver can only get rid of about one standard drink per hour.*

Nothing can speed this up—not even black coffee, cold showers, exercise or vomiting. For more information on myths about alcohol see 7 Myths About Alcohol. Depending on how much you drink, you can still be over the legal limit to drive a

car hours after your last drink.

In Australia, the legal limit for drinking and driving for most people is .05 BAC. In NSW there are three blood alcohol limits.

Zero applies to:

- ALL learner drivers.
- ALL Provisional 1 drivers.
- ALL Provisional 2 drivers.
- ALL visiting drivers holding an overseas or interstate learner, provisional or equivalent licence.[PR1]

Under 0.02 applies to:

- Drivers of vehicles of “gross vehicle mass” greater than 13.9 tonnes.
- Drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods.
- Drivers of public vehicles such as taxi or bus drivers.

> *A BAC of 0.02 can be reached after the consumption of only one standard drink (a middy of beer, a nip of spirits or a small glass of wine). This means that drivers subject to a 0.02 limit should not consume any alcohol before driving.*

Under 0.05 applies to:

- ALL other licences (including overseas and interstate licence holders) not subject to a 0.02 or zero limit.

Dance Wize NSW have more information on safe drinking practices.

Alcohol related resources

Online resources

Online resources that can help you learn how to minimise risks to your health and monitor your drinking:

- How alcohol impacts your physical health
- How alcohol impacts your mental health
- How to know how much alcohol you are drinking (what a standard drink looks like)
- How to measure if your drinking habits are putting you at risk Your Room quiz
- How to stay safe at Schoolies
- Standard drinks calculator on Your Room
- WellMob has cultural support and resources made by and for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Youth Law Australia information on the laws around young people and alcohol
- State Library NSW have more information on the laws around young people and alcohol
- Signs you might have a drinking problem
- How alcohol and other drugs impact mental health
- Getting help