

Limit alcohol

Regardless of the type of alcohol (beer, wine or spirits) you drink, the risk of developing cancer of the bowel, mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver and breast is increased. The risk is even higher for some of these cancers in smokers who consume alcohol. Cancer risk increases from the first alcoholic drink you have.

There are other things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer, such as not smoking, healthy eating, being physically active and maintaining a healthy bodyweight. It is important to look at the risks and benefits of drinking alcohol for you personally.

The more alcohol you consume, the greater your risk of developing cancer. If you choose to drink, we recommend you follow the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines and limit your intake to two standard drinks a day.

Other health problems and alcohol

Heavy use of alcohol is linked to many health problems, such as cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, alcohol dependence, stroke, suicide, injury and car accidents.

Even at low intake, alcohol contains a lot of energy (kilojoules or calories) so it can easily contribute to weight gain. Being overweight or obese also increases your cancer risk.

Smoking and alcohol

It has been known for a long time that smoking is harmful to health. The combined effects of smoking and alcohol greatly increase the risk of cancer (more so than from either of these factors alone). Up to 75 per cent of cancers of the upper airway and digestive tract can be related to alcohol plus smoking.

What should I do?

To reduce your risk of cancer, if you don't drink, don't start. If you choose to drink:

- limit your intake - National Health and Medical Research Council recommends no more than two standard drinks a day
- avoid binge drinking. Do not 'save' your drinks using alcohol-free days, only to consume them in one session
- have at least two alcohol-free days every week
- choose low alcohol drinks
- eat some food when you drink.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

One standard drink



- 220-250 ml alcopop/alcoholic soda ($\frac{2}{3}$ bottle)
- 100 ml wine (1 bottle = 7 standard drinks)
- 60 ml (2 nips) of sherry
- 30 ml (1 nip) of spirits
- 425 ml (1 schooner) of light beer
- 285 ml (1 middy) of full strength beer

Want to know where this information comes from? Click [here](#).

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