

Fact sheet

Number 1.25 revised June 2009
For general audience

What is a standard drink?

An Australian standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol (12.5ml of pure alcohol). By counting standard drinks you can keep track of how much you are drinking and how that compares to the *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*.

This fact sheet provides a guide to how many standard drinks are in common containers of alcohol.

For more information about a specific alcoholic drink, read the label on the bottle, can or cask. It will list approximately how many standard drinks are inside the container.

How many standard drinks are in a...?

Sometimes it can be difficult to keep track of how much alcohol you are actually drinking because:

- › glass sizes are not the same in different places
- › different types of drinks contain different amounts of pure alcohol
- › sometimes drinks are mixed with unknown quantities of alcohol, such as in cocktails and alcoholic punches
- › sometimes jugs and casks are shared
- › glasses may be "topped up" before they are empty.

Some of these problems can be overcome by using a standard measure of the amount of alcohol that is being drunk, called a "standard drink".

Pot of beer (285ml)

Full strength (4.8% alc./vol) = 1.1 standard drinks

Mid strength (3.5% alc./vol) = 0.8 standard drinks

Low strength (2.7% alc./vol) = 0.6 standard drinks

Stubby/can of beer (375ml)

Full strength (4.8% alc./vol) = 1.4 standard drinks

Mid strength (3.5% alc./vol) = 1.0 standard drink

Low strength (2.7% alc./vol) = 0.8 standard drinks

NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS – BEER



NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS – WINE



NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS – SPIRITS



Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol
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Red, white or sparkling wine (12% alc./vol)

Small glass (100ml) = 1.0 standard drink

Average restaurant serve (150ml) = 1.4 standard drinks

Bottle (750ml) = 7.5 standard drinks

Fortified wine (18% alc./vol)

Standard serve (60ml) = 0.9 standard drinks

Spirits (40% alc./vol)

"Shot" or "nip" (30ml) = 1 standard drink

Bottle (700ml) = 22 standard drinks

Ready-to-drink (RTD) or pre-mixed spirits/wine

275ml bottle full strength (5.0% alc./vol) =
1.1 standard drinks

375ml can/bottle full strength (5.0% alc./vol) =
1.5 standard drinks

275ml bottle high strength (7.0% alc./vol) =
1.5 standard drinks

375ml can/bottle high strength (7.0% alc./vol) =
2.1 standard drinks

(Adapted from *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*, Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council, 2009)

What are the potential problems with drinking too much alcohol?

Drinking in excess of recommended guidelines can have harmful effects on your health.

These risks include:

- Short-term risks and harms such as hangovers, headaches, nausea, shakiness, vomiting, memory loss, risk of falls and injury, assaults, car accidents, unplanned pregnancy, and accidental death
- Long-term risks and harms such as cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, brain damage, memory loss and sexual dysfunction.

Excessive alcohol use can also affect many other areas of your life, including family, work and personal relationships. You may feel ashamed and embarrassed

by your behaviour while intoxicated. You might experience problems at work or school and legal and financial problems. For example, you might lose valuable items such as mobile phones, spend recklessly while intoxicated, damage your own or public property, or have to take time off work or school due to hangovers.

Low risk drinking guidelines

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*, recommend:

1. To reduce the risk of an alcohol-related injury or disease during their lifetime, healthy men and women should drink no more than two standard drinks on any day.
2. To reduce the risk of an immediate alcohol-related injury, healthy men and women should drink no more than four standard drinks on any one occasion.
3. For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking is the safest option.

Parents and carers are advised that children under the age of 15 are at greatest risk of harm from drinking and it is especially important that they do not drink alcohol.

If young people aged 15–17 years choose to drink they should be in a safe environment, supervised by adults and stay within the low risk guidelines.

4. For women who are pregnant, are planning a pregnancy, or are breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.

Remember, there is no safe level of drinking.

More information

- For more information about standard drinks and the *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol* visit www.alcohol.gov.au.
- If you are worried about the amount you are drinking, and would like help to cut down, see your family doctor or contact the alcohol and other drug service in your state or territory www.druginfo.adf.org.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=support.
- For more information on drugs and drug prevention contact the DrugInfo Clearinghouse on tel. 1300 85 85 84, email druginfo@adf.org.au.

More information

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