Alcohol and the body

Excessive drinking above the recommended level on a regular basis can have long-term effects on the body.

Brain
- memory loss
- confusion
- blackouts
- difficulty in solving problems
- strokes.

Mouth and throat
- cancer of the mouth, throat and oesophagus.

Muscles
- weakness
- loss of muscle tissue.

Breast
- cancer risk rises with increasing consumption.

Nervous system
- tingling and loss of sensation in hands and feet caused by damaged nerves
- impaired coordination and balance.

Heart
- high blood pressure
- irregular pulse
- damaged heart muscle.

Pancreas
- painful inflammation.

Intestines
- inflammation
- bleeding
- ulcers.

Reproductive system
- impotence
- reduced fertility
- fetal abnormalities.

Liver
- impaired liver function
- painful inflammation
- cirrhosis
- liver cancer.

Stomach
- inflammation of the stomach lining
- bleeding.

Muscles
- weakness
- loss of muscle tissue.

Intestines
- inflammation
- bleeding
- ulcers.

Liver
- impaired liver function
- painful inflammation
- cirrhosis
- liver cancer.

Drinking guidelines

The Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol recommend that healthy men and women should drink:

- no more than two standard drinks on any day in order to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related diseases or injury in the long-term.
- no more than four standard drinks on any one occasion in order to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injury in the short-term.

These drinks should be spread over several hours and everyone should try to have at least one or two alcohol-free days a week.

For more information about standard drinks and the Australian alcohol guidelines, visit www.alcohol.gov.au.

For more information

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Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)
Phone: 1300 13 1340
Confidential telephone counselling and information available between 8.30am and 10pm every day.

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia
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