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.

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
> cancer.

Reproductive system
> impotence
> reduced fertility
> fetal abnormalities.

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

Stomach
> inflammation of the stomach lining
> bleeding.

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.