

This resource provides a summary of alcohol, including info on what it is, how it affects your mind and body, what happens when you have too much, mixing with other drugs, ways that you can be safer, and where to get support if you need it.

Also known as: *grog, charge, booze, liquor, turps.*

What is alcohol?

Beer, wine, cider, spirits, coolers or home brew.

Alcohol is a depressant drug, which means it slows down how your brain talks to the other parts of your body.

How alcohol can make you feel (short-term):



ready to have a yarn full of energy and confidence

more relaxed sad, angry or worried.¹

The more you drink, the stronger you might feel these effects. This can also depend on where you are and who you're with, and how you feel before you start drinking.

When you drink, you may also say or do things you normally wouldn't. Drinking can also lead to accidents, aggression and fights.

What alcohol can do to your body (short-term):



slower reflexes clumsy and uncoordinated

faster heart rate slurred speech

confusion.¹

You might feel something as quickly as 10-15 minutes after your first drink. This will depend on how fast you drink, the type of drink, if you have eaten beforehand, and your size/weight.

How long does alcohol last?

Your body can only get rid of one standard drink every hour. You're likely to keep feeling the effects for a while if you drink a lot at once or continue to drink without having a break.²

What happens when you drink too much?

- slower breathing
- blurred vision
- confusion
- vomiting
- loss of memory
- passing out.¹

If you or someone you know experiences these symptoms, call triple zero (000) immediately. Ambulance officers do not have to involve the police unless there is a threat to their safety.

What happens if I drink all the time?

Regular use of alcohol may lead to:

- dependence/addiction
- poor memory
- difficulty having children
- cancers, heart disease, stroke and liver disease
- mental health conditions can get worse
- your Mob might get worried about you.³



What happens when I stop drinking after a while?

Giving up alcohol after a long time can be dangerous because the body is not used to going without it. You might go into withdrawal, which can be serious and sometimes cause death.⁴

You might experience:

- sweating a lot
- shaking
- feeling sick
- no appetite
- feeling anxious or annoyed
- trouble sleeping
- seeing or hearing things that aren't there
- seizures.^{1, 4}

It's important to speak to a doctor if you want to stop drinking, you can also call one of the support numbers at the end of this page.

What happens when I mix alcohol with other drugs?



Alcohol + gunja: might make you feel a bit sick and wobbly, and can lead to vomiting.⁵



Alcohol + ice/cocaine: cocaine/ice can mask the effects of alcohol and you may drink more. Can increase risk of alcohol poisoning.⁵



Alcohol + benzos/GHB/heroin: high risk of overdose, may feel clumsy or wobbly, slow breathing, sick and vomiting, memory loss, passing out, and possible death.⁵

How can I stay safer?

- No more than 4 standard drinks in one day, and no more than 10 standard drinks during a week
- Eat before and during drinking
- Drink something with zero alcohol between drinks
- Stay away from spirits
- Drink plenty of water (this helps with a hangover too)
- Avoid drinking alone
- Don't drive or operate machinery after drinking.⁵

Alcohol and pregnancy

Drinking alcohol when you're pregnant can cause harm to your baby. It increases the risk of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) which can impact a child's learning, memory and behaviour.⁶

It is also safer not to drink while breastfeeding, as alcohol can pass through breastmilk.⁶

Where to get support:

National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline (24/7): 1800 250 015

You can speak with a counsellor over the phone, get information on drugs and links to support services. They speak to family and friends too.

13 Yarn (24/7): 13 92 76

If you need some crisis support, you can get free assistance from this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line.

Brother to Brother (24/7): 1800 435 799

Free 24-hour crisis line to support Aboriginal men experiencing issues relating to relationships, family violence, drugs and alcohol.

Yarning Safe and Strong (24/7): 1800 959 563

A service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You can get free counselling over the phone. They can also support friends and families who need to have a yarn with someone about their wellbeing.

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS): 03 9419 3000

Provides a wide range of in-person health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria. You can find similar services in different locations across Australia using HealthInfoNet's resource: [Map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health/medical services.](#)

References

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