

# DrinkCheck

Is your drinking okay?



**Health New Zealand**  
Te Whatu Ora

# What sort of drinker are you?

DrinkCheck can help you find out more about your drinking. Just complete the questionnaire and add up your score.

Then find out what it means. It's that easy!

# Understanding standard drinks

The quiz will ask you how many standard drinks you have – so you need to know what a standard drink is before you start.

The standard drinks measure helps you to know how much alcohol is in a drink, as the size and alcoholic strength of drinks vary so much. Alcoholic drink labels say how many standard drinks are in the bottle, can or cask.

Here are some examples of the standard drinks in common alcoholic drinks.

APPROX.  
**1.0**  
Standard  
Drinks™



330ml  
bottle  
of beer  
4% alcohol

APPROX.  
**1.5**  
Standard  
Drinks™



150ml  
glass  
of wine  
12.5% alcohol

APPROX.  
**1.3**  
Standard  
Drinks™



330ml  
glass  
of cider  
5% alcohol

APPROX.  
**7.7**  
Standard  
Drinks™



750ml  
bottle of still or  
sparkling wine  
13% alcohol

APPROX.  
**1.6**  
Standard  
Drinks™



330ml  
RTD  
bottle  
6% alcohol

APPROX.  
**1.0**  
Standard  
Drinks™



30ml  
shot  
of spirits  
42% alcohol

APPROX.  
**1.5**  
Standard  
Drinks™



50ml  
tumbler  
of spirits  
37.5% alcohol

# Is your drinking okay?

Answer each question by scratching the circle next to your choice. Pick the answer that is closest to your situation.

How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- Never (do not need to complete quiz) 0
- Monthly or less 1
- Two to four times a month 2
- Two to three times a week 3
- Four or more times a week 4

How many standard drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking? (To find out what a standard drink is see [Understanding standard drinks.](#))

- One to two 0
- Three to four 1
- Five to six 2
- Seven to nine 3
- Ten or more 4

How often do you have six or more standard drinks on one occasion?

- Never 0
- Less than monthly 1
- Monthly 2
- Weekly 3
- Daily or almost daily 4

During the past year, how often have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?

Never	0
Less than monthly	1
Monthly	2
Weekly	3
Daily or almost daily	4

During the past year, how often have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking?

Never	0
Less than monthly	1
Monthly	2
Weekly	3
Daily or almost daily	4

During the past year, how often have you needed a drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?

Never	0
Less than monthly	1
Monthly	2
Weekly	3
Daily or almost daily	4

During the past year, how often have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?

Never	0
Less than monthly	1
Monthly	2
Weekly	3
Daily or almost daily	4

During the past year, have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?

- Never 0
- Less than monthly 1
- Monthly 2
- Weekly 3
- Daily or almost daily 4

Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?

- No 0
- Yes, but not in the past year 1
- Yes, during the past year 2

Has a relative, friend or doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you should cut down?

- No 0
- Yes, but not in the past year 1
- Yes, during the past year 2

### Add up the scores

Add up all your scores and turn the page to find out what sort of drinker you are.

Your total score:

# What your score means

The different score ranges are due to differences in the effect of alcohol on men and women.



There is no safe level of alcohol use at any stage of pregnancy or breastfeeding. Even small amounts of alcohol can result in an unborn baby developing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is a lifelong disability that impacts the brain and body.



# What are these problems?

There is no amount of alcohol that is considered safe and drinking any alcohol can be potentially harmful.

If your score was in the medium or high-risk categories you may be experiencing, or start to experience, the following problems:

- a range of health issues including hypertension, stroke, liver disease and several cancers
- injuries from accidents, assaults
- mental health issues eg, anxiety and/or depression
- impotence and loss of sex drive
- becoming dependent on alcohol ie, not being able to stop drinking
- harmful interactions with your medication
- lowering your overall immunity to infectious diseases

and particularly with high-risk drinking:

- brain injury and/or dementia
- complete loss of liver function ie, cirrhosis.

The risk of experiencing harms from alcohol increases

- the more you drink per session
- the more frequently you drink per week, and
- the longer (over time) that you drink at this level.

# How to reduce your risk

To reduce your risk, follow the advice below:



## Reduce your long-term health risks

NO MORE THAN

**2**

STANDARD DRINKS  
DAILY

NO MORE THAN

**3**

STANDARD DRINKS  
DAILY

and no more than  
10 a week

and no more than  
15 a week

and at least 2 alcohol free days per week

## Reduce your risk of injury

NO MORE THAN

**4**

STANDARD DRINKS

NO MORE THAN

**5**

STANDARD DRINKS

on any single occasion



## Pregnant women

NO ALCOHOL

**0**

STANDARD DRINKS

*There is no safe level  
of alcohol use at any  
stage of pregnancy.*

# What you can do to cut down your drinking

- Work out how many drinks you want to drink, and stick to it.
- Don't allow others to top up your drink.
- Eat before you drink and while you're drinking.
- Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, including water.
- Drink lower strength alcohol drinks.
- Do more activities that don't involve drinking.
- Tell your friends you are cutting back and ask for their support.

## **You should not drink alcohol if you:**

- could be pregnant, are pregnant or are trying to get pregnant
- are on medication that interacts with alcohol, such as antibiotics or antidepressants (Talk with your doctor if you are unsure)
- have a condition made worse by drinking alcohol
- feel unwell, depressed, tired or cold as alcohol could make things worse
- are about to operate machinery or a vehicle.

# Need help or support?

Making changes to the way you drink can be hard to do on your own.

If you're having trouble easing up on how much alcohol you drink, talk to your health professional eg, GP or practice nurse.

Your health professional eg, GP or practice nurse, can refer you to a specialist counsellor, an alcohol treatment service or to another health or social service that can help you.

You can call the Alcohol Drug Helpline free on **0800 787 797** or **free text 8681**.

If you like, you can use the helplines

Māori Line – **0800 787 798**

Pasifika Line – **0800 787 799**

All calls are free and confidential. You can call 24 hours a day, any day and you will talk with a trained counsellor.

Your whānau and friends can also call the helpline for information on how to better support you.

## **You can also look at:**

### **[alcohol.org.nz](https://www.alcohol.org.nz)**

Learn more about alcohol, its effects, standard drinks and other alcohol advice for different age groups.

### **[alcoholdrughelp.org.nz](https://www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz)**

Live chat, find an alcohol treatment service near you, or to learn more about drugs and alcohol.

### **[livingsober.org.nz](https://www.livingsober.org.nz)**

Be part of an online community where you can find support, advice and insights from experts and from other people who have faced their own drinking issues.

For help contact the Alcohol  
Drug Helpline on **0800 787 797**  
or free text **8681**

To order resources visit  
**[resources.alcohol.org.nz](https://resources.alcohol.org.nz)**

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