Short-term effects of drinking alcohol*

Eyes

blurred or double vision

Mouth and throat

 slurred and confused speech

Blood and circulation

- alcohol levels in the blood rise
- alcohol moves rapidly to all parts of the body, including to an unborn baby

Liver -

• breaks down alcohol at an average rate of one standard drink per hour

Kidneys and fluid balance

- more urine is made
- loss of minerals and salts
- dehydration

Bones and muscles

- clumsiness and difficulty walking
- broken bones, sprains, cuts, bruises and internal injuries (from falls, assaults and traffic crashes)

Whole of body

- coma and death from
- alcohol poisoning
- death from injuries existing health conditions
- made worseinteractions with other drugs/medicines
- alcohol breakdown products used for energy

* The likelihood of experiencing these effects varies depending on the amount, the strength and how quickly alcohol is consumed, and on individual factors, such as body type, age and gender.

Brain and nervous system

- thought processes, judgement and
- concentration are impaired • mood changes
- mood changes
 loss of memories
- (blackouts)
- disrupted sleep

Lungs

 alcohol levels in the breath rise

Skin

flushing and sweating

Pancreas and sugar balance

 sugar levels in the blood lower

Stomach and intestines

- alcohol is absorbed from
- the gut into the blood
- indigestion
- diarrhoea
- nausea and vomiting
- inflamed lining

Sex organs and pregnancy

- sexual performance reduces (in men)
- chance of unsafe sex, sexual assault and unplanned pregnancy
- potential miscarriage, stillbirth or long-term
- damage to an unborn baby

For more information, go to **alcohol.org.nz**

Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora