



## Alcohol and the effects on the body

Now that the festive season is over for another year, it is a good time to reflect on our drinking habits and culture. During the Christmas and New Year period, there is an increase in festivities – parties, gatherings, work functions and catch ups. This tends to lead to excess, especially when it comes to alcohol.

Research tells us that even when people intend to drink responsibly, this can be difficult due to social pressures to drink. One of the most important ways to create a less harmful drinking culture is to challenge the acceptance of drunkenness, and acknowledge the problems that go with it.

Depending on the physical condition of the person and how much is consumed, alcohol intake can cause a range of short term effects

including slurred speech; drowsiness; vomiting and headaches; breathing difficulties; impaired vision, judgement and coordination; and unconsciousness, blackouts and coma. At the start of the night we tend to think about the fun and laughter that will ensue, but perhaps we should think about how we'll feel at the end of the night and into the next day.

We also don't consider the long term effects of alcohol intake, whether this is infrequent binge drinking in large amounts or the regular three or more drinks over dinner during the week. Long term effects include injuries from accidents; increased family and relationship problems; health problems including alcohol poisoning, high blood pressure, stroke, heart and liver disease; and a range of cancers.



### So what is a “safe” drinking limit?

Not drinking alcohol is the best way to reduce your risk, but if you do drink, health experts recommend the following to stay at low risk of harm:

- For healthy men and women, drink no more than ten standard drinks per week.
- For healthy men and women, drink no more than four standard drinks on any one day.
- For children and young people under 18 years, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.
- For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy, or breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.

These updated guidelines were released in December 2019. The previous (2009) guidelines recommended no more than 2 standard drinks per day (equating to up to 14 standard drinks per week).

Standard drinks are a way to measure how much alcohol you drink. Drinks come in different sizes and some are stronger than others, as they have different amounts (percentages) of alcohol in them.

A standard drink is always equal to 10g of alcohol. Look for the standard drink information on the label or drinks, or ask a staff member if purchasing from a bar or restaurant.



**100ml**      **285ml**      **30ml**

### One standard drink

*A serve of full strength beer (285ml), a serve of distilled spirits (30ml), and a serve of red or white wine (100ml) contain the same amount of alcohol - one standard drink.*

If you think alcohol may be a problem for you, it may be time to seek advice from a professional. You can contact your local GP or helplines such as Alcohol Drug Information Service (ADIS) on 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024.

# Mosquito season

In summer, a lot of time is spent outdoors but this is also when mosquitoes breed and bite. There is no cure or vaccine to protect against diseases transmitted by mosquitoes in Australia. The only way to prevent infection from diseases transmitted by mosquitoes is to avoid being bitten. Know how to prevent mosquito bites – cover up, repel, clean up.

## Travelling within Western Australia or interstate?

Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus occur in all regions of WA. However, the risk of infection is particularly high if you are travelling to northern WA or the South West.

Murray Valley encephalitis and Kunjin viruses occur in the northern two thirds of WA only. The risk of infection is highest if you are travelling to the Kimberley and Pilbara regions during or shortly after the wet season.

If you are travelling to Bali or northern Queensland, be aware that occasional outbreaks of dengue virus occur.

Dengue causes severe flu-like symptoms including fever, headaches, muscle and joint pains, rash, nausea and vomiting. A second infection with a different strain of dengue in your lifetime can lead to a more severe form of the illness that is potentially fatal if not treated appropriately. Dengue virus is not transmitted by mosquitoes in WA.

For more information search Fight the Bite online or visit [www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)

## Chia pudding

Perfect for a simple breakfast, or an afternoon snack that won't fill you with sugar. You can prepare your chia pudding in advance and it will store in a jar or Tupperware container for up to a week in the fridge.

**Serves 1**

**5 min preparation time**

**Ingredients – Serves two**

- ▶ 2 tablespoon chia seeds
- ▶ 1/2 cup almond milk or milk of choice
- ▶ 1 teaspoon honey or other sweetener, optional
- ▶ Add any fruit or nuts for toppings (recommend berries with slithered almonds)

**Method**

- ▶ Pour ingredients into a jar and mix well. Let settle for 2-3 minutes then mix again very well until you see no clumping.
- ▶ Cover the jar and store in fridge overnight or for at least 2 hours.
- ▶ When you're ready to eat it, top with your favourite fruit and enjoy cold!



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