



Drink spiking

Drink spiking is when alcohol or another drug is added to your drink without you knowing. It is illegal. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can be spiked. Drink spiking can happen at night clubs, bars and parties and can make you unable to defend yourself, or to remember what happened. It can also result in you becoming unconscious. Drinks are most commonly spiked with alcohol itself (e.g. by adding strong spirits), but sedatives and other drugs are also used. People who spike drinks may be aiming to rob the person who consumes the drinks, or to physically or sexually assault them. You can avoid drink spiking by only accepting drinks from people you know or trust, and by not leaving your drink unattended. If you are unsure about what's in your drink, don't drink it. If you suddenly feel dizzy or sick, tell a friend and get them to take you to a safe place.

If someone passes out and is unconscious, or cannot walk or talk because they have drunk too much alcohol:

1. Call an ambulance on 000.
2. Do not leave them alone.
3. Lay them on their side in the first aid 'recovery' position.
4. Clear their airway and check their breathing.
5. If they stop breathing, commence resuscitation. If you don't know how, find someone who does.

Drinking problem?

If you think that you or a friend may have a drinking problem, it is important that you talk to someone about it. A GP can help with withdrawal and treatment programs and can refer someone to a specialist drug and alcohol service. All Australian states and territories have drug and alcohol services that can help.

Finding More Information

- Visit your local doctor.
- Ring Lifeline on 131 114.
- Ring Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.
- Contact your local Community Health Centre (under Health Services in the information pages at the front of the White Pages).
- Contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service in your state or territory (visit <http://druginfo.adf.org.au/support>)
- View AMA information on Alcohol Use and Harms in Australia at <http://www.ama.com.au/node/4762>
- Check out Reachout at <http://au.reachout.com/>
- Check out headspace at www.headspace.org.au
- Visit The Australian Drug Foundation at www.adf.org.au
- View the Standard Drinks Guide on the Department of Health and Ageing website.
- Visit the Australian Drug Information Network at <http://www.adin.com.au>

If these services can't provide the information you need, they will be able to give you the contact details of a service in your area that can.

YOUR LOCAL GP:



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Alcohol

Alcohol is a commonly used beverage. People drink alcohol for a range of reasons – including relaxation and celebration. Alcohol can be enjoyed in sensible quantities. However, alcohol is a mind-altering substance and has a number of potentially harmful effects. Alcohol can:

- slow down the activity of the brain and the central nervous system, impairing speech, movement, mood and judgement;
- increase the risk of accidents, drink driving, injury as a pedestrian, unsafe sex, physical and sexual assault, self-harm and overdose;
- cause drowsiness, loss of balance, nausea and vomiting.

The likelihood and severity of these harmful effects will increase with the amount of alcohol consumed

Regular excessive drinking can:

- jeopardise people’s jobs and relationships, and cause legal or financial difficulties;
- cause serious health conditions – including cancer, heart and circulation problems, impotence and liver disease.

Importantly, heavy drinking can affect brain development in young people.

In Australia, 13% of deaths among 14-17 year olds are due to alcohol. It has been estimated that, each week in Australia, alcohol contributes to the hospitalisation of more than 60 teenagers and the death of at least one. More than half of all serious alcohol-related road injuries occur among 15-24 year olds. About one-third of all self-inflicted injuries and suicides are linked to alcohol.



Alcohol in the body

- After the first drink is swallowed, the alcohol travels to the stomach and small intestine, where 90% of the alcohol passes through into the bloodstream.
- The remaining 10% of the alcohol leaves the body quickly through breath, sweat and urine.
- When alcohol reaches the brain it almost immediately slows down thinking and movement. It also affects the part of the brain that controls vomiting.
- The impact alcohol has on the brain will depend on many factors – including how much the person has drunk and the alcohol content of the drink.
- Alcohol can also prevent the kidneys from absorbing water, and this can result in dehydration.

If the blood alcohol concentration reaches a high enough level, a person can become unconscious and, because alcohol has a depressant effect on the body, eventually breathing will slow down. This can lead to suffocation and death if a person vomits and then inhales it.

‘Sobering up’

The alcohol in our bloodstream can only be removed by the liver. It takes the liver about one hour to break down and clear one standard drink from the body. Contrary to popular belief, cold showers, walking, black coffee, fresh air or vomiting do not speed up this process. People can still have alcohol in their blood the day after a heavy drinking session and may still be affected and be over the legal limit to drive.

“Energy drinks” with alcohol

Some people believe that mixing energy (or high caffeine) drinks with alcohol reduces fatigue and the impairments associated with drinking alcohol on its own. Early studies show that consuming a stimulant along with alcohol only reduces the ‘feeling’ of being drunk, but the physical and mental impairments that the alcohol causes remain the same. Because these impairments will still be real, a reduced feeling of being drunk may lead to increased risk-taking and greater potential harms. This makes combining alcohol with energy drinks particularly dangerous.

What is a standard drink?

A standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol:

LIGHT BEER (2.7% alcohol)

1 glass (285ml)	=	0.6 standard drinks
1 can or stubbie (375ml)	=	0.8 standard drinks
1 schooner or pot (425ml)	=	0.9 standard drinks
1 slab or case	=	19 standard drinks

MID-STRENGTH BEER (3.5% alcohol)

1 glass (285ml)	=	0.8 standard drinks
1 can or stubbie (375ml)	=	1 standard drink
1 schooner or pot (425ml)	=	1.2 standard drinks
1 slab or case	=	24 standard drinks

REGULAR BEER (4.8% alcohol)

1 glass (285ml)	=	1.1 standard drinks
1 can or stubbie (375ml)	=	1.4 standard drinks
1 schooner or pot (425ml)	=	1.6 standard drinks
1 slab or case	=	34 standard drinks

WINE (11.5% - 13.5% alcohol)

1 glass (150ml)	=	between 1.4 and 1.5 standard drinks
1 bottle (750ml)	=	between 6.8 and 7.7 standard drinks
4 litre cask	=	39 standard drinks

SPIRITS (40% alcohol)

1 nip (30 ml)	=	1 standard drink
1 bottle (700ml)	=	22 standard drinks

PRE-MIXED SPIRITS (5% alcohol)

1 bottle (275ml)	=	1.1 standard drinks
1 can (375 ml)	=	1.5 standard drinks

(it’s a good idea to check the label for % alcohol content)

This information is a guide only, as container and glass sizes can vary significantly. People often underestimate the amount of alcohol they have consumed.

Sensible drinking

The 2009 Australian Alcohol Guidelines advise that healthy adults should consume no more than two standard drinks on any day. However, if this is exceeded, consuming no more than four standard drinks on any one occasion will reduce the risk of injury during and immediately after consuming the drinks. Young people have an increased risk of alcohol-related harm and injury. It is therefore safest for young people under 15 not to drink alcohol, and for people between 15 and 17 years to delay taking up drinking for as long as possible.

Drinking regularly over time also increases the risk of developing chronic health conditions.

There is no safe level of drinking during pregnancy. You should avoid alcohol if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.

Party safely

- Eat food before and while you are drinking, but avoid salty foods like nuts and chips that will make you thirsty.
- Have a glass of water or soft drink to quench your thirst before having your first alcoholic drink, and alternate between water or soft drink and alcoholic drinks.
- Avoid rounds or shouts - choose to drink at your own pace.
- Mix your own drinks and hold onto your drinks at all times.
- Don’t drink alone.
- Drink low alcohol drinks.
- Never mix alcohol and other drugs.
- If you think you are going to drive, it is best not to drink at all. (If you are on L-plates or P-plates, special blood alcohol limits apply and can be different in each Australian State and Territory.)
- Look out for your friends, and remember it is more important to get help for someone than to worry about what trouble they may get into for drinking.