

Alcohol Use and Health

Information and recommendations

Alcohol

Alcohol is the most common drug in Norway. It affects all organs of the body, and can cause diseases and health problems affecting the brain, heart, liver, stomach and intestines. It reduces sleep quality and memory, and can lead to depression and anxiety, infections and cancer. If you suffer an illness or injury, alcohol use can worsen the condition. This is true even if your consumption is low.

Harmful alcohol consumption is not the same as alcohol dependence. For most people, drinking less alcohol will improve their health.

! It is therefore important that you are honest with healthcare professionals about how much alcohol you drink.

The risk of adverse health effects increases with increasing alcohol consumption, but varies from person to person. Sex, age and drinking habits all matter. For example, if you consume alcohol fast, drink without eating, or drink very frequently. The young and old are particularly exposed to the harmful effects of alcohol.

! Reducing consumption in the short and long term brings many health benefits.

Alcohol unit

We use the term "unit" to compare the intake of alcoholic beverages because alcohol comes in different strengths and sizes. One unit of alcohol in Norway is equal to 12 grams of pure alcohol.

In practice, this means that one alcohol unit corresponds to approximately:

A small glass of wine, approx. 12,5 cl

A small bottle of beer, approx. 0.33 l

A small glass of liquor, approx. 4 cl



Is there such a thing as risk-free alcohol use?

There is no clear lower limit for risk-free consumption. If you are healthy, up to nine units a week is considered "low risk", provided you do not drink more than four units each time and do not drink several days in a row. However, that does not mean it will not harm you.

Young people under the age of 18 and pregnant women are discouraged from consuming any alcohol at all.

People with illnesses requiring treatment should talk to their doctor about their alcohol use.

! There are no health benefits from drinking alcohol.

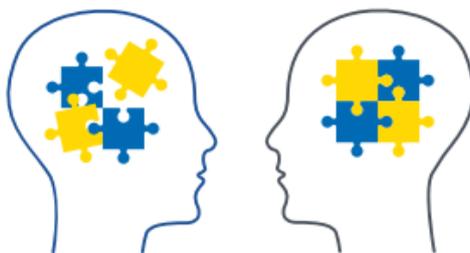
Alcohol and pharmaceuticals

If you are taking medication (medicine), alcohol can influence its effects. The effect could either be stronger or weaker than intended. You may experience additional side effects. This also applies to the use of over-the-counter medicines like painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs.

! Ask your doctor, another health care provider or a pharmacist for advice if you are taking medication.

In summary:

- Alcohol use can contribute to diseases and ailments. Does this apply to you?
- Tell your health care provider, who will be giving you medication or treatment, about your alcohol consumption
- Alcohol and medicines can alter each other's effect



- If you have any questions: ask a healthcare professional, your doctor or a pharmacist for advice



Advice for reducing alcohol consumption:

Drink non-alcohol beverages to quench your thirst.

Avoid getting drunk.

Eat, so you do not drink on an empty stomach.

Limit your alcohol intake by drinking water alongside or switch to beverages with a lower alcohol content.

Think about situations where you might drink more alcohol than what is safe, and avoid those situations.

Try not to reward yourself or comfort yourself with alcohol.

Try to have drink-free days throughout the week.

Need help?

Please contact:

- Your family doctor/GP
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Unit OUS: 23 03 43 10
- RUSinfo: 915 08 588 / www.rusinfo.no
- Blue Cross: 22 03 27 40 / www.blakors.no
- Mental health: 116 123 / www.mentalhelse.no

More information?

- Helsenorge Alcohol - helsenorge.no

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