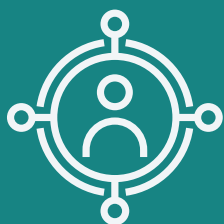


Prepping for Dry July

WELLNESS BULLETIN JUNE 2020



SMG Health has a team of experienced psychologists, health coaches, dietitians and exercise physiologists who are able to provide counselling and coaching support



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Alcohol consumption is widespread in Australia and indeed throughout the world, forming part of our unique culture and social norms. Of course, while most people want to enjoy drinking socially and without harming themselves or others, it's worthwhile reflecting on our own drinking habits from time to time and reminding ourselves of the big benefits to making small changes.

Monitoring our Intake

While we consider a "standard drink" as 10 grams of alcohol, or 100ml of wine, that may not mean that every alcoholic beverage will equal one 'standard drink'. In fact, a typical serve of wine at a restaurant or bar is around 150ml and this makes it difficult for people to know how much alcohol they have consumed.¹

It is well evidenced that the more you drink, the greater the risk of developing chronic disease, injury and premature death.² In Australia, official guidelines³ recommend the following limits to reduce the risk of harm to your health;

- **No more than two standard drinks per day to reduce the risk of long-term harm**
- **No more than four standard drinks on a single occasion to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injury**
- **Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not drink alcohol**

The Effects of Alcohol



Most people who drink alcohol will have experienced some of the short-term effects of alcohol such as headaches, nausea, memory loss, reduced concentration and injury through accidents or assault. Sustained levels of drinking however can cause longer term effects such as dependency on alcohol, and the onset of liver or brain damage.

Further, there is growing evidence that alcohol consumption can also lead to an increased risk of developing mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety and reduced brain function. This is due to the disruptive effect alcohol has on our sleep - a decrease in REM sleep can stunt the brain's ability to learn and to store memory.



Taking steps to change your drinking habits

Tracking your consumption is the first step to tackling it and one easy way to do this is by noting down the number of drinks you are consuming over a week. Then, set limits for yourself and stick to them. Introducing alcohol free days to your week is a good next step, starting by aiming for one alcohol free day then two consecutive free days per week and so on.

Sipping your drink slowly and having a glass of water in between each drink will help to slow down your consumption and make your drink last longer. Equally, it's best to eat before you drink alcohol so that it is absorbed into your bloodstream at a slower rate, however it is best to avoid salty snacks that make you thirsty.

Finally, why not remove temptation altogether by not keeping alcohol in your house or by keeping only alcohol free drinks; this can be really helpful in enhancing your willpower through lack of convenience.



If you are concerned about your drinking, please speak with your General Practitioner or seek the support of your Employee Assistance Program.

1 - National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol. Canberra: Australian Government, 2009.

2 - <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/behaviours-risk-factors/alcohol/overview>

3 - <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

4 - National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: Australian Government, 2013.