

## What is a standard drink?

A standard drink is any drink that contains approximately 10 grams of alcohol.

Use the label on the bottle, can or cask to find out how many standard drinks are inside the container. The following is a quick guide\* to converting drinks to standard drinks.

### How many standard drinks are in a ... ?

#### Pot of beer

Full strength 285ml  
4.9% alc./vol  
= **1 standard drink**



Medium strength 285ml  
3.5% alc./vol  
= **0.7 standard drink**



Light beer 285ml  
2.7% alc./vol  
= **0.5 (half) standard drink**



#### Stubby/Can of beer

Full strength 375ml  
4.9% alc./vol  
= **1.5 standard drink**



Medium strength 375ml  
3.5% alc./vol  
= **1 standard drink**



Light beer 375ml  
2.7% alc./vol  
= **0.8 standard drink**



#### Spirit nip

30ml  
40% alc./vol  
= **1 standard drink**



#### Alcoholic shot

30ml  
40% alc./vol  
= **1 standard drink**



#### Bottle of spirits

700ml  
40% alc./vol  
= **22 standard drinks**



#### Premix spirits

375ml  
5% alc./vol  
= **1.5 standard drinks**



#### Alcoholic soda

300ml  
5% alc./vol  
= **1.2 standard drinks**



#### Port/Sherry

60ml  
18% alc./vol  
= **0.9 standard drink**



#### Average serve of sparkling wine/champagne

170ml  
11.5% alc./vol  
= **1.5 standard drinks**



#### Average restaurant serve of wine

180ml  
12% alc./vol  
= **1.8 standard drinks**



#### Bottle of wine

750ml  
12% alc./vol  
= **7 standard drinks**



\* Standard Drinks Guide and photographs courtesy of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing

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### **How much are you really drinking?**

It can be difficult to work out if your drink is a standard drink because glass sizes are not the same in different drink venues, and different types of drinks contain different proportions of alcohol per volume.

It can also be difficult to keep track of your drinking when containers such as jugs and casks are being shared, when glasses are being topped up before they are empty and when drinks are mixed with unknown quantities of alcohol, such as in cocktails and alcoholic punches.

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines use the idea of a standard drink to help people keep track of how much they drink.

### **What are the problems with drinking alcohol?**

Drinking in excess of recommended low-risk levels can have harmful effects on the drinker's health. These risks include short-term risks, such as injury, violence and accidental death, and long-term risks such as cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, brain damage, memory loss and sexual dysfunction.

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines describe three levels of risk:

**Low risk:** a level of drinking at which there is likely to be little risk of harm

**Risky:** levels at which risks of harm are significantly increased

**High risk:** levels at which the risks of serious harm are substantial.

There are many social and personal problems that can be related to drinking at risky or high-risk levels, including family or relationship problems, problems at work or school, legal and financial problems.

### **Low-risk drinking guidelines**

In order to minimise both short-term and long-term risks to health, the guidelines are:

#### **For men**

No more than 2 Standard Drinks in the first hour and 1 per hour after that

No more than 4 Standard Drinks a day on average, and no more than 6 Standard Drinks on any one occasional day

One or two alcohol-free days a week

#### **For women**

No more than 1 Standard Drink per hour

No more than 2 Standard Drinks a day on average, and no more than 4 Standard Drinks on any one occasional day

One or two alcohol-free days a week

### **Young adults aged 18–25 years**

According to the statistics, young adults are at highest risk of alcohol-related injury. Young adults are especially urged not to drink beyond the guidelines for men and women. In addition they should not:

- drink for several hours before participating in potentially risky activities such as swimming, diving or boating
- mix alcohol with mood-altering drugs.

For further information on the Alcohol Guidelines as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council, see our *Fact Sheet 1.27 Australian Guidelines for low-risk drinking*, or visit the Alcohol Guidelines website at [www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au](http://www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au).