

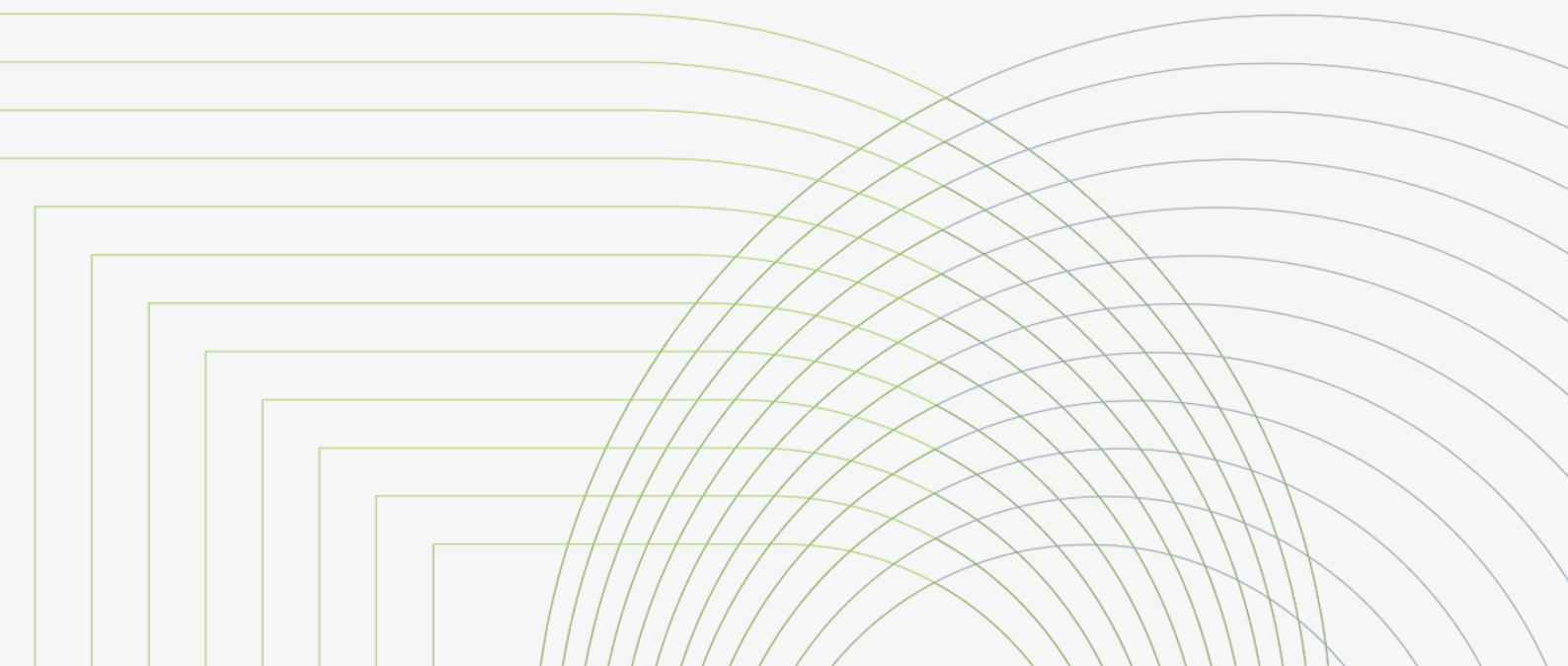
Module 4.1

Drugs and Alcohol:

Alcohol

Keeping the Body in Mind – Resources

Consumer Learning Module



Module 4.1: Alcohol

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About Alcohol

Alcohol is consumed regularly in our society. It is available at most social functions and is generally accepted as a way of enjoying yourself, socialising and relieving stress. However, it can have negative consequences for many people, for a variety of reasons.



For some people, having one drink leads to having many more. They don't know when to stop. Others do things they regret when they drink.

What alcohol does to you depends on:



How much you drink



Whether you drink alone



How quickly you drink it



Whether you use alcohol with other drugs or medications



Your size and weight



How good your general health is



Whether you are male or female



If you have a family history of alcohol dependence



Where you drink



How healthy your liver is

Some people get physically sick when they drink. Other people find a different side of their personality emerges when they drink, such as overt aggressiveness or becoming very emotional.



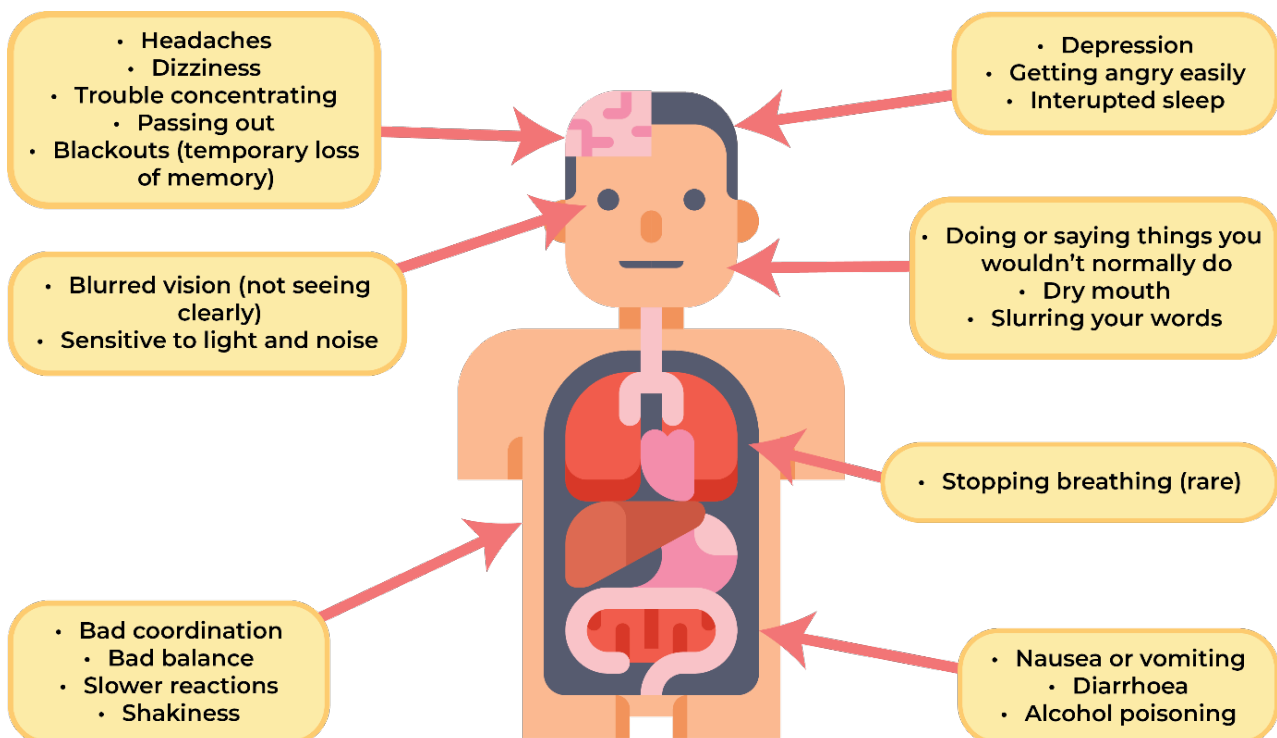
Activity: Are there ways in which alcohol has negatively affected the way you behave?

There are also physical health effects from heavy drinking and many people are not aware of these.

Short-Term Effects

Alcohol slows down the messages sent between the brain and the rest of the body. Initially this can feel good, and you may feel that it helps you to relax.

However, drinking a lot, especially in a short time, can cause the following:





Activity: What are the effects on your physical health and body that you have noticed after a night of heavy drinking?

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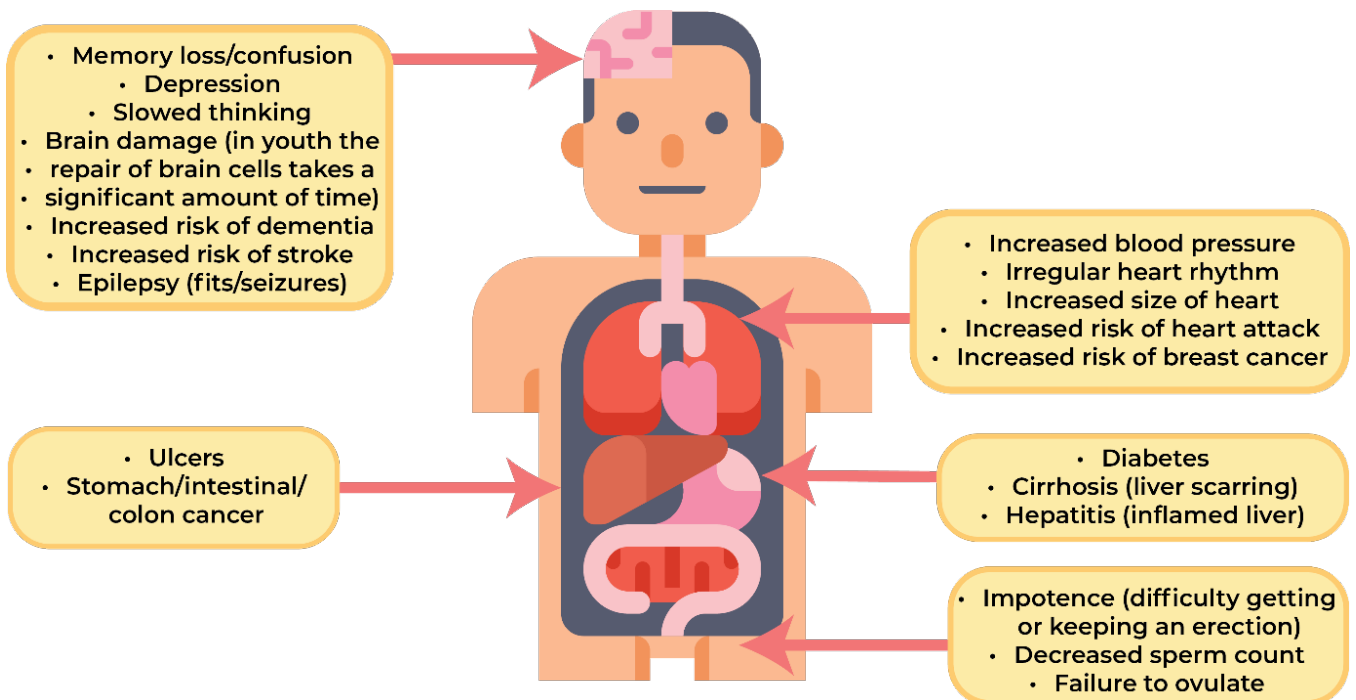
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Long-Term Effects

Drinking a lot of alcohol regularly over time is likely to cause problems for your physical, emotional, and social health. Damage to some body organs can be chronic and permanent.

Some of the long-term effects of drinking alcohol include:



It can also affect your long-term well-being by interfering with your work and study. Alcohol is expensive and can cost you a lot of money. It may also affect your ability to look after your children or family.

Alcohol affects judgment, sight, and coordination, so drinking often causes accidents – especially car crashes and drowning. Alcohol misuse is a major contributing factor in assaults and other violent crimes.

For many people, drinking alcohol may be an enjoyable social activity. However, some people find that over time, drinking may become more important and starts to interfere with other parts of their life.

How do I know if my drinking is becoming a problem?



Drinking in situations that are unsafe or where no alcohol is best (e.g. driving a car or operating a machine)



Alcohol-related problems at work, school, or home (e.g. feeling sick, losing a missing classes at university or school, not doing things you promised you would or forgetting things)



Strained relationships with friends, family or workmates caused by drinking (e.g. arguments, break-up or divorce).



Alcohol-related legal problems (e.g. losing your licence, assault, losing custody of your children).




Financial difficulties or money problems resulting from drinking (e.g. being unable to pay your rent, not having enough money for groceries).

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2020) recommend:

1. Drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week each.
2. Drink no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.
3. People under 18 should not drink alcohol.
4. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not drink alcohol.


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2: CHILDREN AND PEOPLE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE


Should not drink alcohol



to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol.

3: WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING


Should not drink alcohol




to prevent harm from alcohol to their unborn child or baby.

1: HEALTHY ADULTS

Drink no more than 10 standard drinks a **week**



AND
no more than 4 standard drinks on **any one day**











to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol.

The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm.

What is a standard drink?



 <p>LIGHT BEER 425 ml 2.7% alc/vol</p>	 <p>MID STRENGTH BEER 375 ml 3.5% alc/vol</p>	 <p>FULL STRENGTH BEER 285 ml 4.9% alc/vol</p>	 <p>REGULAR CIDER 285 ml 4.9% alc/vol</p>
 <p>SPARKLING WINE 100 ml 13% alc/vol</p>	 <p>WINE 100 ml 13% alc/vol</p>	 <p>FORTIFIED WINE (e.g. sherry, port) 60 ml 20% alc/vol</p>	 <p>SPIRITS (e.g. vodka, gin, rum, whiskey) 30 ml 40% alc/vol</p>

The standard drink is defined in the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code.

NHMRC

www.nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol

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AUSTRALIA**

Alcohol can impact on mental health in many ways. Alcohol is a depressant, so it can make you feel low, sad, or anxious while you are drinking and, in the days after.

For people who have experienced anxiety or depression, this can mean alcohol will act as a powerful trigger to bring back those negative feelings. It can work against treatment and the hard work you have put in during your recovery.



Activity: Have you found alcohol has affected your feelings or mood?

Give some examples:



Activity: If you wanted to cut down, what would you have to change about the things that trigger/influence you to use alcohol?



Activity: Using SMART goals, list some achievable goals for this week:

Available Supports

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) – a 24-hour free, confidential drug and alcohol counselling service on 1800 250 015 (24 hours/day, 7 days/week).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – a self-help organisation for people with alcohol problems. Phone the national helpline number 1300 22 22 22 (24 hours/day, 7 days/week).

Mia's Story

Mia is a 35-year-old woman who lives with social anxiety disorder. She wants to reduce her alcohol consumption and improve her health. She decides to try some alcohol basics and see how they work for her. Here is her journey:

- She learns about the effects of alcohol. She knows that alcohol can affect her body and mind in many ways. It can make her feel relaxed, happy, or confident at first, but then it can make her feel sick, sad, or anxious later. It can also harm her liver, brain, heart, and other organs. It can also worsen her mental health and interfere with her medication.

- She learns about the Australian Alcohol Guidelines. She knows that she should limit her alcohol intake to no more than ten standard drinks per week and no more than four standard drinks on any single occasion. She also knows that she should have some alcohol-free days every week. She learns how to measure a standard drink and how to keep track of her drinking.
- She learns how to reduce her alcohol consumption. She thinks about why she drinks and what triggers her to drink. She finds other ways to cope with her stress, boredom, loneliness, or anxiety. She drinks water or soft drinks instead of alcohol. She avoids situations where there is a lot of drinking or pressure to drink. She says no to alcohol when she does not want to drink.
- She learns how to get help for her alcohol problem. She knows that she is not alone and that there are people who care about her and want to help her. She talks to her doctor or therapist about her alcohol use and how it affects her health and well-being. She also joins a support group or a program that can help her to quit or cut down on alcohol.

Mia feels happier and healthier after trying these tips. She notices that she reduces her alcohol consumption and improves her health. She also copes better with her social anxiety and feels more confident and in control. She decides to continue alcohol basics and enjoy the benefits.

**Congratulations! You've now completed module 4.1 Drugs and Alcohol -
Alcohol**



**Scan the QR code or visit the link for online
access to all of the modules and a complete
list of references or visit the link below:
mindgardens.org.au/KBIMResources**



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