







Know Your Standards

What is a standard drink?

A 'standard drink' is a unit of measurement. In the same way as one metre measures a particular distance travelled, one standard drink measures a particular amount of alcohol consumed (or poured).¹ Health experts define standard drink sizes to establish guidelines for alcohol use and work out safe drinking levels.

A standard drink in Australia contains 10g of alcohol.

This is always the same, no matter what type of alcoholic beverage or how it is served. As some drinks are stronger than others (for example, low-strength beer is around 2.7% whereas spirits are typically 40%), the higher the alcohol concentration of a drink, the less liquid it contains.

Beer		Wine		Spirits	
Light	Full Strength	Red / White	Champagne	Straight	Shot
					
2.7% Alc./Vol	4.6% Alc./Vol	12% Alc./Vol	12% Alc./Vol	40% Alc./Vol	40% Alc./Vol
425ml	285ml	100ml	100ml	30ml	30ml
1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

One Australian standard drink is equal to approximately:

- 285 mL of full strength beer (4.6% alc. vol)
- 425 mL of low strength beer (2.7% alc. vol)
- 100 mL of wine (12% alc. vol)
- 100 mL of champagne (12% alc. vol)
- 30 mL of spirits (40% alc. vol)

Serving size vs standard drink size

Often, alcoholic drinks which are purchased contain more than one standard drink. A serving of alcohol in a pub or club can be larger than a 'standard' drink, for example a standard drink of wine is 100ml but a typical serve may be 150ml.

Interesting Fact: When at a licenced venue, the line on a wine glass (plimsoll line) does NOT indicate a standard drink measure. This line indicates approximately 150ml which enables the venue to serve 5 glasses per bottle.

Labelling of standard drinks

In Australia, all bottles, cans and casks containing alcoholic beverages are required by food labelling law to state on the label the approximate number of standard drinks they contain. Labels on alcoholic beverages display the number of standard drinks and alcohol content (%) each specific type of alcohol/beverage contains.

http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor_standard_drinks.asp



Beer



Spirits



Wine

¹ Australian Government, Department of Health. Standard drinks guide. Retrieved from: <http://www.alcohol.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/standard>

Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol (Australian Alcohol Guidelines)

SUMMARY OF THE GUIDELINES

Guideline 1: Reducing the risk of alcohol-related harm over a lifetime

The lifetime risk of harm from drinking alcohol increases with the amount consumed.

For healthy men and women, drinking no more than two standard drinks on any day reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

Guideline 2: Reducing the risk of injury on a single occasion of drinking

On a single occasion of drinking, the risk of alcohol-related injury increases with the amount consumed.

For healthy men and women, drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion.

Guideline 3: Children and young people under 18 years of age

For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

A. Parents and carers should be advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking alcohol is especially important.

B. For young people aged 15–17 years, the safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

Guideline 4: Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Maternal alcohol consumption can harm the developing fetus or breastfeeding baby.

A. For women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, not drinking is the safest option.

B. For women who are breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.

Counting standard drinks can help assist people to stay within the Australian Alcohol Guidelines:

2	4	0	0
To lower your risk of an alcohol related injury or disease during your lifetime, drink no more than 2 standard drinks on any day.	On any one occasion, drink no more than 4 standard drinks to reduce your risk of immediate alcohol related injury.	For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.	For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding a baby, not drinking is the safest option.