

# Alcohol after stroke

## What you need to know

- › If you drink alcohol, talk with your doctor about:
  - o **If** and **when** you can drink alcohol
  - o **How much** alcohol you can drink.
- › Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of having another stroke.
- › Alcohol can increase the impact of changes to your speech, thinking, vision and balance caused by your stroke. If fatigue is an issue for you, alcohol may make it worse.
- › Alcohol can interfere with some medicines. It can be harmful if you are taking warfarin.
- › If you want to drink less or stop drinking alcohol, there are strategies you can use. If you need support, speak with your doctor. There are services that can help.

## Alcohol and stroke risk

High blood pressure, atrial fibrillation (AF), being overweight and uncontrolled type 2 diabetes all increase your risk of having another stroke.

**High blood pressure.** Drinking alcohol can lead to high blood pressure.

**Atrial fibrillation (AF)** is a heart condition. When you have AF, your heart beats fast and out of rhythm.

Drinking alcohol increases your risk of developing AF. If you have AF, alcohol causes more frequent episodes of AF.

If you drink alcohol and you have AF, talk with your doctor.

**Unhealthy weight.** Drinking alcohol can make it harder to get to and maintain a healthy weight.

**Uncontrolled type 2 diabetes.** Drinking alcohol can make it harder to control blood sugar levels.

## Stroke impacts

Drinking alcohol can increase the impact of changes to your speech, thinking, vision and balance. If fatigue is an issue for you, alcohol may make it worse.

## Stroke medicines

Alcohol can interfere with some medicines. Alcohol can be harmful if you are taking warfarin. Warfarin is a blood-thinning medicine. Talk with your doctor about alcohol and your medicines.

## Talk with your doctor

Your doctor can give you advice on alcohol and your stroke risk, stroke impacts and medicines. You may need to wait before you drink alcohol again. Your doctor can tell you:

- o **If** and **when** you can drink alcohol
- o **How much** alcohol you can drink.

## Advice for healthy people

The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm from alcohol. The Australian Guidelines say healthy men and women should have:

- › No more than 10 standard drinks a week
- › No more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.

The Guidelines are for healthy people. Ask your doctor for advice.

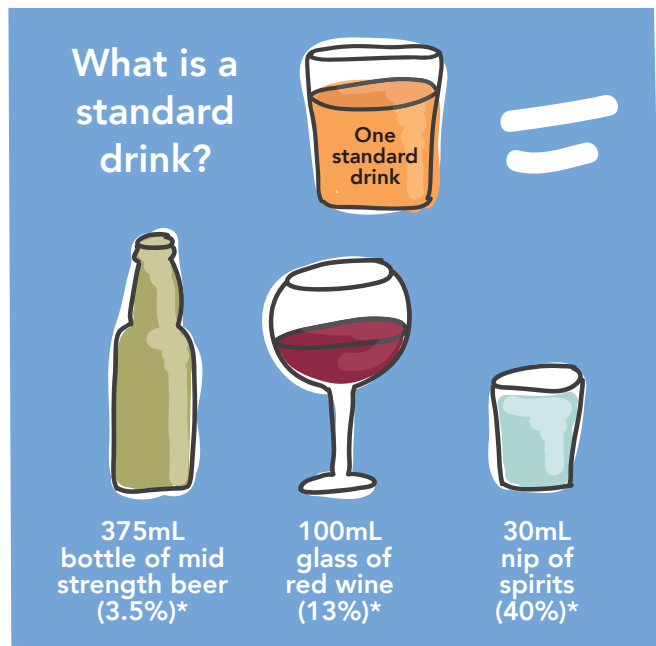
## Standard drinks

Spirits: 30 ml of spirits with 40% alcohol by volume is 1 standard drink.

Beer: A 285 ml glass of full-strength beer is 1.1 standard drinks. A 285 ml glass of low-strength beer is 0.6 standard drinks. 285 ml is a small glass of beer.

Wine: 100 ml of wine or champagne is about 1 standard drink. The average glass in restaurants and pubs is 150 ml.

The label states how many standard drinks are in the bottle.



## Drinking less or stop drinking alcohol

Talk with your doctor about how to drink less or stop drinking alcohol.

If drinking less alcohol is one of your goals, there are simple strategies you can use.

Start by keeping a diary of when and how much you drink. In social situations:

- › Drink slowly and make every second drink a non-alcoholic drink. Choose sparkling water rather than a sugary drink.
- › Drink low-alcohol drinks such as light beer.

Some people will encourage you to drink more alcohol. Say "I'm not drinking" or "I've had one already thanks." You don't need to explain or justify your decision not to drink alcohol.

For strategies and tips on drinking less, visit [hellosundaymorning.org](https://hellosundaymorning.org)

It isn't always easy to drink less or to stop drinking alcohol. If you need help, talk with your doctor. There are services that can help. Treatment and counselling services are available face to face, by telephone or online.

Call the **National Alcohol and Other Drug Helpline** on **1800 250 215**. The Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Counselling Online** provides support to people affected by alcohol or drug use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit [counsellingonline.org.au](https://counsellingonline.org.au)

## Get help

**StrokeLine's** health professionals provide information, advice, support and referral. StrokeLine's practical and confidential advice will help you manage your health better and live well.

Call **1800 STROKE (1800 787 653)**  
Email [strokefoundation@strokefoundation.org.au](mailto:strokefoundation@strokefoundation.org.au)

**EnableMe** can help with your stroke recovery. Get the information you need and connect with other survivors and families. Visit [enableme.org.au](https://enableme.org.au)

## Alcohol support services

The **National Alcohol and Other Drug Helpline** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **1800 250 215**.

**Counselling Online** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [counsellingonline.org.au](https://counsellingonline.org.au)

## About us

Stroke Foundation partners with the community to prevent, treat and beat stroke. We do this through raising awareness, facilitating research and supporting survivors of stroke.

## Contact us

 **StrokeLine 1800 STROKE (1800 787 653)**

 [strokefoundation.org.au](https://strokefoundation.org.au)

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