

SENSIBLE DRINKING GUIDELINES (Last updated August 2016)

Recommendations on drinking levels considered “minimum risk” for men and women exist in many countries globally. Official guidelines on alcohol consumption are usually produced by a government department, public health body, medical association or non-governmental organization, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Official drinking guidelines are issued by governments and public health entities to advise on levels of alcohol consumption considered “safe,” “responsible,” or “low-risk”. They do not apply to those under the legal drinking age or to pregnant women. Those on medication or with a history of illness should consult their GP for specific advice. Some guidelines suggest one or two alcohol free days a week. Visit the websites cited for full country guidelines.

Information included in guidelines offers recommendations on low-risk drinking levels for men and women, may also define a standard drink or standard drink which differ in each country) and offer advice to particular populations deemed to be at an increased risk for harm.

Standard drinks summary

Official “drinks” or “units” generally contain between 8 and 14 grams of pure ethanol, although the measure varies among countries. There is no consensus internationally on a single standard drink size.

Means of tracking how much alcohol people are drinking can be a useful tool for those serving alcohol, as well as for those consuming it. In a number of countries around the world, drinks are generally served in well-defined amounts at restaurants and bars. From a commercial perspective, this allows servers or retailers to monitor how much alcohol is being dispensed and ensures that drink sizes do not vary significantly across venues. For licensing authorities, standard measures are a useful tool for tracking sales. The sizes of servings are largely shaped by local customs and culture. The strengths of different types of beverage alcohol vary significantly, and using standard measures allows for uniformity. Thus, in terms of the alcohol it contains, a standard drink or standard drink will be the same—regardless of whether it contains beer, distilled spirits, wine, or a mix of any of these beverages.

NB: Many countries have a maximum recommended gram intake per day without defining standard drink size. Some countries are not listed, where the consumption of alcohol is forbidden, for religious reasons, for example.

For the many countries where there are no official Government guidelines, it is recommended that the Internationally recognised World Health Organisation low risk responsible drinking guidelines are followed. Which are:

(2) Women should not drink more than two drinks a day on average

(3) For men, not more than three drinks a day on average

(4) Try not to exceed four drinks on any one occasion

(0) Don't drink alcohol in some situations, such as when driving, if pregnant or in certain work situations and abstain from drinking at least once a week. Men or women who consistently drink more than these recommended levels may increase risks to their health.

International responsible drinking guidelines

Country	Unit/ Standard Drink	Recommended guidelines for adult 'low risk' consumption – Maximum levels in grams of alcohol
Argentina	N/A	<p>Ministry of Health - Dietary guidelines for the Argentinian population Men: Maximum daily amount of 3 glasses of beer (450ml), 2 glasses of wine (300ml), or 2 shots of spirit. Women: Maximum daily amount of 2 glasses of beer (300ml), 1 glass of wine (150ml) or 1 shot of spirit (40ml). Reduce alcohol consumption for the general population and avoid it for children, adolescents, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. www.assal.gov.ar/assa/documentacion/guias_alimentarias.pdf</p> <p>Consumer advice website Some advice via: www.vivamosresponsablemente.com</p>
Australia	10g	<p>Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol (National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines) For healthy men and women: Drinking no more than two standard drinks per day (20g) reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury. Drinking no more than four standard drinks (40g) on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion. For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option. Parents and carers should be advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and not drinking in this age group – under 15 years – is especially important. For young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay drinking for as long as possible. For women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy and women who are breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option. www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol-guidelines</p>
Austria	8g	<p>Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs Men: No more than 24g per day and 21 standard drinks of 8g per week Women: No more than 16g/day and 14 standard drinks of 8g per week Hazardous drinking is defined as consuming 60g/day or more for men and 40g/day or more for women. The guidelines advise pregnant women to avoid alcohol. bmg.gv.at/home/Schwerpunkte/Drogen_Sucht/Alkohol</p>
Belgium		<p>Consumer advice website: Abstain from alcohol 2 days a week Do not consume more than 4 standard drinks per day Do not consume more than 2 to 3 standard drinks per day on average Do not consumer alcohol if you are pregnant www.educalcool.be/</p>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10g	<p>Ministry of Health Men: No more than 20g a day Women: No more than 10g per day Pregnant women should refrain from drinking alcohol. www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/bosnia-and-herzegovina/en/</p>

Bulgaria	N/A	<p>Ministry of Health For adults, aged 18 and over, No more than the age of 65: Men: No more than 16g per day Women: No more than 8g per day ncphp.government.bg/files/hranene-en.pdf</p>
Canada	13.6g	<p>Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Reduce your long-term health risks: Men: No more than 15 drinks a week, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days. Women: No more than 10 drinks a week, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit. Reduce your risk of injury and harm by drinking no more 4 drinks (for men) and 3 drinks (for women) on any single occasion. If you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or before breastfeeding, the safest choice is to drink no alcohol at all. If you are a child or youth, you should delay drinking until your late teens. www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p>Consumer advice website - Éduc Alcool – 2,3,4,5 or 0 2 Women who want to drink responsibly – and for the health benefit after menopause – should have no more than TWO drinks a day. 3 Men who want to drink moderately – and for the health benefit after age 40 – should have no more than THREE drinks a day. 4 To avoid intoxication and the associated complications, women should have no more than FOUR drinks on a single occasion. 5 Men who wish to avoid intoxication and the associated complications should have no more than FIVE drinks on a single occasion. 0 A good habit: To avoid any kind of habituation or dependency, everyone – men and women – should have NO alcoholic drinks at least one day a week. For women of child-bearing age, do not drink alcohol from the time you decide to become pregnant, or if you think you might be pregnant. www.educalcool.qc.ca</p>
Croatia	10g	<p>Ministry of Health - Dietary Guidelines for adults Men: No more than 20g per day. Women: No more than 10g per day. www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/croatia/en/</p>
Czech Republic	N/A	<p>National Institute of Public Health The recommendations are for healthy adults. Men: No more than 24g per day. Women: No more than 16g per day. www.szu.cz/</p>
Cyprus		<p>Ministry of Health – Nutrition and exercise guidelines Men: No more than 2 drinks per day. Women: No more than 1 drink per day. www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/cyprus/en/</p>

Denmark	12g	<p>National Board of Health Men: No more than 14 standard drinks per week (168g). Women: No more than 7 standard drinks per week (84g). The National Board of Health recommends that children under the age of 16 years should not drink alcohol. Young people between 16 and 18 years should drink as little as possible. www.sst.dk and www.goda.dk/</p>
Estonia	10g	<p>Estonian Nutrition Society Men: No more than 20g per day Women: No more than 10g per day Pregnant or breastfeeding women, children and adolescents, are advised to avoid alcohol. www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/estonia/en/</p>
Finland	11g	<p>Finnish nutrition recommendations 2014 Men: The mean consumption of alcohol should not exceed 20g per day. Women: The mean consumption of alcohol should not exceed 10g per day. Alcohol should be no more than 5% of energy intake. Children and young people, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women should not consume alcohol at all. www.ravitsemusneuvottelukunta.fi/files/attachments/fi/vrn/ravitsemussuosituksset_2014_fi_web.3.pdf</p>
France	10g	<p>Based on WHO international guidelines cited by the Health Ministry Men: No more than 3 standard drinks per day (30g). Women: No more than 2 standard drinks per day (20g). The National Program for Health & Nutrition (PNNS) recommends: Those who drink should reduce their consumption; pregnant women should not drink; do not drink and drive. www.2340.fr</p>
Germany	12g	<p>German Nutrition Society - D-A-CH reference values As acceptable amount of alcohol is currently 10 g / day for healthy women and 20 g / day are considered for healthy men. The indication in g / day should not be construed as a recommendation to drink alcohol every day. Consumer advice website Men: No more than 2 standard drinks per day (24g). Women: No more than 1 standard drink per day (12g). Two alcohol free days per week are recommended for both men and women. No alcohol for children. No alcohol in pregnancy or while breastfeeding. www.kenn-dein-limit.de/alkohol/risikoarmer-alkoholkonsum/tipps-und-regeln/</p>
Greece	10g	<p>Men: No more than 3 standard drinks per day (30g). Women: No more than 2 standard drinks per day (20g). Never exceed 40g per day. Those under 18, pregnant or breastfeeding women should not consume alcohol. www.eneap.com.gr/</p>

Hong Kong	10g	<p>Hong Kong Government – Department of Health</p> <p>If you do not drink at all, do not start drinking with the intent of improving health. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, limit your drink to minimise alcohol-related harm.</p> <p>Do not drink if you are pregnant or planning for pregnancy</p> <p>Do not drink if you are underage</p> <p>If you are breastfeeding, alcohol drinking is not recommended</p> <p>www.change4health.gov.hk/en/alcohol_aware/facts/minimising/index.html</p>
Hungary	N/A	<p>National Institute for Food and Nutrition Science</p> <p>Men: No more than 2 drinks a day.</p> <p>Women: 1 drink a day.</p> <p>It is wise to drink alcoholic beverages at the time of meals, because alcohol will be then absorbed more slowly.</p> <p>ftp.fao.org/es/esn/nutrition/dietary_guidelines/hun.pdf</p>
Iceland	12g	<p>Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Council, Public Health Institute</p> <p>Pregnant women are advised to abstain when pregnant or if breastfeeding.</p> <p>www.lydheilsustod.is</p>
India	10g	<p>National Institute of Nutrition - Dietary Guidelines for Indians (2010)</p> <p>Avoid alcohol. Those who drink should limit its intake. People who regularly consume more than two alcoholic drinks (about 30 mg) are at a higher risk for hypertension and stroke.</p> <p>Alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy... Since alcohol is secreted into the breast-milk and could prove harmful to the breast-fed infant. Caution should be exercised by breastfeeding mothers.</p> <p>Adolescents should avoid alcohol.</p> <p>Consumer advice website</p> <p>Men should not regularly exceed 3-4 Units Per Day</p> <p>Women should not regularly exceed 2-3 Units Per Day</p> <p>drinkresponsibly.in</p>
Indonesia	N/A	<p>Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia</p> <p>National Dietary Guidelines state: 'Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages'</p>
Ireland	10g	<p>Health Service Executive - Low risk drinking guidelines</p> <p>For adults:</p> <p>Men: No more than and No more than 17 standard drinks per week.</p> <p>Women: No more than 11 standard drinks per week.</p> <p>Drinks should be spaced out over the week, not consumed in one sitting. Drinking more than the safe levels may cause harm.</p> <p>These weekly limits do not apply to teenagers or to people who are pregnant, ill, run-down or on medication. It is healthier for teenagers not to drink alcohol.</p> <p>www.hse.ie/go/alcohol/</p>
Israel	14g	<p>Men: No more than 30g per day</p> <p>Women No more than 20g per day</p>

Italy	12g	<p>National Research Institute for Food and Nutrition The Nutritional Guidelines (Linee guida per una sana alimentazione italiana- 2003) state: The acceptable daily quantity of alcohol is 0.6g per kilo of body weight. If only wine is consumed, the guidelines suggest drinking less or equal to 450ml (3 glasses) for men and less or equal to 350 ml (2 glasses) for women, to be divided between lunch and dinner. Consumers are recommended to avoid consumption during adolescence, pregnancy, and breastfeeding; older adults are recommended to reduce their drinking. nut.entecra.it/656/Bevande_alcoliche_se_si_solo_in_quantit_agrave_controllata.html</p> <p>Consumer advice website Men: No more than 2-3 standard drinks per day (24-36g) Women: No more than 1-2 standard drinks per day (12-24g) Elderly: No more than 1 standard drink/day (12g) Children and teens should not drink at all until at least age 16. www.beviresponsabile.it/pag.php%3Fcatgen=palc_quantitamoderata</p>
Japan	19.75g	<p>Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Men: 1-2 standard drinks per day (19.75g-39.5g). Women N/A</p>
Korea	8.5g	<p>Men: 14 unit per one week. Women: 10 unit per one week.</p>
Latvia	10g	<p>Men: 3-4 standard drinks per day and no more than 22 standard drinks per week. Women: 2-3 standard drinks per day and no more than 12 standard drinks per week. Both men and women should refrain from drinking for at least three days a week. Pregnant women are advised to limit their consumption to a single drink and to avoid spirits. www.atbildigi.lv</p>
Lithuania	10g	<p>Ministry of Health, Health eating guidelines (2010) No more than 20g a day for both men and women. Consumer advice website Men: No more than 3 standard drinks per day, and no more than 15 per week with no alcohol on at least 2 days a week. Women: No more than 2 standard drinks per day, and no more than 10 a week and no alcohol for at least 2 days a week.</p> <p>Give up alcohol completely during pregnancy or in women planning to become pregnant. www.bukatsakingas.lt</p>

Luxembourg	12.8g	<p>Ministry of Health Adults For healthy adults Men: Not to consume more than 2 glasses of beer (25cl) or wine (10cl) per day. Women: not to consumer more than 1 glass of beer (25cl) or wine (10cl) per day. It is advised not to drink alcohol 2-3 days per week. From 18-20 years, consumption should be less than the recommendations for adults because brain development is completed after the age of 20 years. For youth 16-18 years, abstention should be the rule. Do not consumer alcohol if you are pregnant www.sante.public.lu/fr/prevention/modes/alcool/conseils/index.html</p> <p>Consumer advice website: Abstain from alcohol 2 days a week Do not consume more than 4 standard drinks per day Do not consume more than 2 to 3 standard drinks per day on average Do not consumer alcohol if you are pregnant www.educalcohol.lu/</p>
Malta	8g	<p>Sedqa - Government agency against drug and alcohol abuse For people under 18 years, according to the World Health Organisation, “there is no scientific evidence for a safe limit of alcohol consumption, and particularly not for children and young adolescents, the most vulnerable groups”. Therefore keep drinking to a minimum. For people aged between 18 and 21 years: not more than two standard drinks on a single occasion, since the human body would be still developing No more than that age; not more than once or maximum twice a week. Men over 21 years: No more than 21 standard drinks per week, spread over five or six days. Women over 21 years: No more than 14 standard drinks per week, spread over five or six days. Abstaining from alcohol for some days is always beneficial.</p> <p>Consumer advice website Based on WHO low-risk drinking definition is: (2) Women do not drink more than two drinks a day on average (3) For men, not more than three drinks a day on average (4) Try not to exceed four drinks on any one occasion (0) Not to drink alcohol in some situations, such as when driving, if pregnant or in certain work situations and to abstain from drinking at least once a week. www.drinkawaremalta.com</p>
Mexico		<p>Institute of Nutrition and Health If alcoholic beverages are taken, do not drink more than two drinks a day and only with food. www.fns.org.mx/index.php?IdContenido=46&IdSubContenido=57</p> <p>Consumer advice website www.alcoholinformate.org.mx</p>
The Netherlands	10g	<p>The Health Council of the Netherlands For healthy adults: Men: No more than two standard drinks of alcohol per day (20g). Women: No more than one standard drink per day (10g). Do not drink alcohol if you or your partner are pregnant or planning to be, or if you are breastfeeding.</p>

New Zealand	10g	<p>Health Promotion Agency</p> <p>Men: no more than 3 standard drinks a day and no more than 15 standard drinks a week Women: no more than 2 standard drinks a day for women and no more than 10 standard drinks a week</p> <p>At least two alcohol-free days every week.</p> <p>Reduce your risk of injury on a single occasion of drinking by drinking no more than 5 standard drinks for men on any single occasion and 4 standard drinks for women on any single occasion</p> <p>Advice for pregnant women or those planning to get pregnant no alcohol – (There is no known safe level of alcohol use at any stage of pregnancy).</p> <p>Advice for parents of children and young people under 18 years</p> <p>For children and young people under 18 years, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking alcohol and not drinking in this age group is especially important. • For young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay drinking for as long as possible. • If 15 to 17 year olds do drink alcohol, they should be supervised, drink infrequently and at levels usually below and never exceeding the adult daily limits. <p>www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/advice-on-alcohol/low-risk-alcohol-drinking-advice</p>
Norway	12g	<p>Directorate for Health</p> <p>Men: No more than 21 standard drinks of alcohol a week. Women: No more than 14 standard drinks of alcohol a week.</p> <p>The Directorate of Health recommends limiting alcohol intake, that one does not drink alcohol for health reasons, and to avoid intoxication. Children and young people under 18 and pregnant are advised to completely abstain from alcohol.</p> <p>avogtil.no/fakta/drikker-du-for-mye/</p>
Poland	10g	<p>State Agency</p> <p>Men: 2 standard drinks per day (20g/day) No more than 5 times/week (not to exceed 100g/week). Women: 1 standard drink/day (10g/day) No more than 5 times/week (not to exceed 50g/week).</p> <p>Two alcohol free days per week are recommended.</p> <p>Alcohol should be avoided by young people and pregnant women and nursing mothers.</p> <p>www.parpa.pl</p>
Portugal	14g	<p>National Council on Food and Nutrition</p> <p>The New Food Wheel Guide (Portuguese: A nova roda dos alimentos) - 2008</p> <p>In moderation and with meals, adults can consume without risk</p> <p>Alcoholic beverages are not recommended for children, adolescents, pregnant and breastfeeding women.</p> <p>https://sigarra.up.pt/fcnaup/pt/noticias_geral.ver_noticia?p_nr=8186</p> <p>Consumer advice site</p> <p>Men: No more than 2-3 standard drinks per day (28-42g). Women: No more than 1-2 standard drinks per day (14-28g).</p> <p>www.bebacomcabeca.pt/</p>
Romania	N/A	<p>Ministry of Health</p> <p>Men and Women: 32.5g beer/day or 20.7g wine/day.</p> <p>Avoid alcohol if trying to conceive, if pregnant, breast feeding or if elderly.</p> <p>www.ms.ro</p>

Singapore	N/A	Ministry of Health National Dietary Guidelines Men: a maximum of 3 drinks a day. Women: a maximum of 2 drinks a day. www.hpb.gov.sg/HOPPortal/health-article/2638
Slovakia		Consumer advice website: www.pisrozumom.sk/main.php
Slovenia	10g	Institute of Public Health Men: No more than 20g/day, 50g on a special occasion. Women: No more than 10g/day, 30g on a special occasion.
South Africa	N/A	Government dietary guidelines 2005 If you drink alcohol, drink it sensibly A glass or two of an alcoholic beverage served with meals occasionally is not harmful. ftp.fao.org/es/esn/nutrition/dietary_guidelines/zaf_eating.pdf
Spain	10g	Ministry of Health Men: Maximum of 40g per day or 17 drinks per week. Women: Maximum of 25g per day or 28 drinks per week. www.msssi.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/prevPromocion/alcohol/mojateAlcohol.htm
	N/A	Basque Country: Department of Health & Social Security Not to exceed 70g/day
	8-10g	Catalonia: Central Authority Not to exceed 4-5 standard drinks per day (32-50g/day)
Sweden	N/A	Swedish Research Council The intake of alcohol should be limited: max 5 percent of the energy intake should come from alcohol, Men: no more than 20 grams per day. Women: no more than 10 grams of alcohol per day. Pregnant women, children and adolescents should completely abstain from alcoholic drinks. www.livsmedelsverket.se
Switzerland	10-12g	Swiss Federal Commission for Alcohol Problems Consumers are recommended not to drink more than 4 standard drinks of alcohol in one session and not to consume more than 1 standard drink per hour; they are asked to avoid drinking alcohol when participating in sports or before driving/operating machinery. Underage young people are urged to avoid alcohol. Men and Women: No more than 2 standard drinks per day (20-24g).
Taiwan	N/A	Consumer advice site www.tbaf.org.tw
Thailand	N/A	Ministry of Public Health National Dietary Guidelines advise 'Avoid or reduce the consumption of alcoholic beverages'

<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>8g</p>	<p>UK Department of Health Men and Women 14 standard drinks/ week (112g). Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive should avoid alcohol altogether. However, if they do choose to drink, to minimise the risk to the baby, they should not drink more than one or two standard drinks once or twice a week and should not get drunk. www.drinking.nhs.uk/</p> <p>Guidance from the UK Chief Medical Officers An alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best option. However, if children drink alcohol underage, it should not be until at least the age of 15 years. If young people aged 15 to 17 years consume alcohol, it should always be with the guidance of a parent or carer or in a supervised environment. Parents and young people should be aware that drinking, even at age 15 or older, can be hazardous to health and that not drinking is the healthiest option for young people. If 15 to 17 year olds do consume alcohol, they should do so infrequently and certainly on no more than one day a week. Young people aged 15 to 17 years should never exceed recommended adult daily limits and, on days when they drink, consumption should usually be below such levels. www.drinkingandyou.com www.drinkaware.co.uk</p>
<p>USA</p>	<p>14g</p>	<p>Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 Moderate alcohol consumption is defined as Men: No more than 2 drinks per day for men. Women No more than 1 drink per day. Heavy or high-risk drinking is defined as Men: More than 4 drinks on any day or more than 14 per week. Women: More than 3 drinks on any day or more than 7 per week. Women who are pregnant or who may be pregnant. Drinking during pregnancy, especially in the first few months of pregnancy, may result in negative behavioral or neurological consequences in the offspring. No safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy has been established breastfeeding women should be very cautious about drinking alcohol, if they choose to drink at all. If the infant's breastfeeding behaviour is well established, consistent, and predictable (no earlier than at 3 months of age), a mother may consume a single alcoholic drink if she then waits at least 4 hours before breastfeeding. Alternatively, she may express breast milk before consuming the drink and feed the expressed milk to her infant later. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's report 2010 includes these findings: Strong evidence consistently demonstrates that compared to non-drinkers, individuals who drink moderately have lower risk of coronary heart disease... Moderate evidence suggests that compared to non-drinkers, individuals who drink moderately have a slower cognitive decline with age... An average daily intake of one to two alcoholic beverages is associated with the lowest all-cause mortality and a low risk of diabetes and CHD among middle-aged and older adults. www.dietaryguidelines.gov</p> <p>National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Men: No more than 4 drinks on any single day & no more than 14 drinks per week. Women: No more than 3 drinks on any single day & no more than 7 drinks per week. Pregnant women should not drink alcohol. www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking</p> <p>American Heart Association Men: an average of No more than 2 standard drinks per day (28g/day). Women: and average of No more than 1 standard drink/day (14g/day).</p>