



ASHLEIGH FELTHAM

ALCOHOL: IT'S NOT JUST KILOJOULES TO WORRY ABOUT

Ashleigh Feltham explores the health impact of alcohol.

YOU CAN CONTACT ASHLEIGH VIA:
Web: feedyourfuturedietetics.com
Facebook: [FeedYourFutureDietetics](https://www.facebook.com/FeedYourFutureDietetics)
Instagram: [@feedyourfuturedietetics](https://www.instagram.com/feedyourfuturedietetics)

Drinking a glass of wine after a long day, or heading to the pub with mates after work is often considered part of our culture; but is it dangerous to your health? If you're drinking above the recommended standard drink/s for your gender, it certainly can be.

Energy per gram of alcohol sits just below fat, at 29kJ or 6.9 calories per gram compared to fat, which has 37kJ or 8.8 calories per gram. It's important to understand that alcohol is not calorie free and the term 'beer gut' does have merit to its meaning. Having a beer gut increases your risk of many lifestyle diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Therefore, having a lifestyle where you drink more than the recommended maximum of standard drinks per day will also increase your risk of cancers, such as breast, oesophageal, lung, gastric, and endometrial to name a few.

But, it's not all bad news! There is moderate evidence that drinking within the recommended maximum standard drinks can reduce your risk of some diseases including heart disease.

It's important to note that we're all different and must, therefore, consider our whole health profile when and if we choose to drink. For example, women who are pregnant are encouraged not to drink any alcohol. Similarly, if you have high blood pressure limiting or not drinking alcohol is also recommended.

About now, you may be thinking 'what is the recommended amount I can drink to reduce the risk to my health?' Firstly, a standard drink is 10g of alcohol, so if you do choose to indulge then for men, the recommended maximum amount of alcohol is two standard drinks a day, and one standard drink a day for women.

Sometimes we drink more than this, but if it's only an infrequent occurrence, and equals no more than four standard drinks, then it can be considered okay; but should it become a habit, then here are a list of beverages and the number of standard drinks that they equate to.

Beer

Full strength (4.8% alcohol volume)

- 285ml glass = 1.1 standard drinks
- 375ml bottle or can = 1.4 standard drinks
- 425ml glass = 1.6 standard drinks
- 24 x 375ml case = 34 standard drinks

Mid strength (3.5% alcohol volume)

- 285ml glass = 0.8 standard drinks
- 375ml bottle or can = 1 standard drink
- 425ml glass = 1.2 standard drinks
- 24 x 375ml case = 24 standard drinks

Low strength (2.7% alcohol volume)

- 285ml glass = 0.6 standard drinks
- 375ml bottle or can = 0.8 standard drinks
- 425ml glass = 0.9 standard drinks

- 24 x 375ml case = 19 standard drinks

Wine

Red wine (13% alcohol volume)

- 100ml standard serve - 1 standard drink
- 150ml average restaurant serving = 1.5 standard drinks
- 750ml bottle = 7.7 standard drinks

White wine (11.5% alcohol volume)

- 100ml standard serve = 0.9 standard drink
- 150ml average restaurant serving = 1.4 standard drinks
- 750ml bottle = 6.8 standard drinks

Champagne (12% alcohol volume)

- 150ml average restaurant serving = 1.4 standard drinks
- 750ml bottle = 7.1 standard drinks

Port (17.5% alcohol volume)

- 60ml standard serve = 0.8 standard drinks
- 2L cask = 28 standard drinks

Take home message

If you choose to drink, drink to enjoy the occasion and not to become completely wasted. The taste should be enjoyed but just like a special treat like chocolate it is best enjoyed in moderation. Take the time to enjoy each sip and by savouring the moment and the flavour, you may find it is easier to enjoy alcohol within the recommended limits. **OH!**