



Alcohol Use in Western Australia.

Long term harms from alcohol

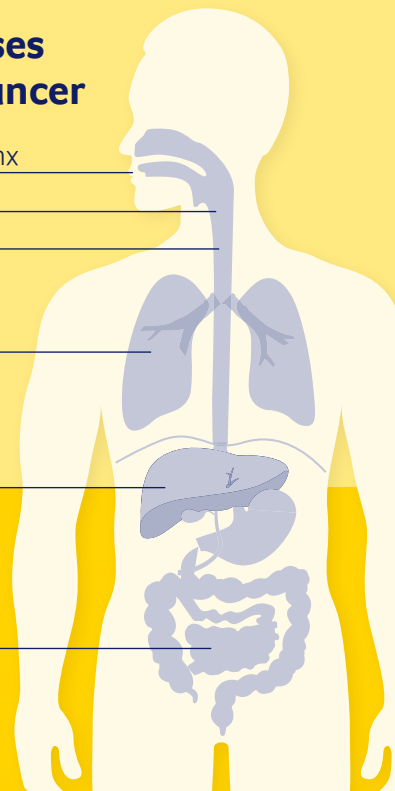
Alcohol is classified as a **Group 1 carcinogen** and is linked to more than 200 diseases, including at least **7 types of cancer**.

The more alcohol is drunk by Australians, the more harm individuals, families and our broader community experiences.


National guidelines recommend that to reduce the risk of long-term harm from alcohol, healthy adults should have no more than **10 standard drinks** a week.¹

Alcohol causes 7 types of cancer

- Mouth and pharynx
- Larynx
- Oesophagus
- Breast
- Liver
- Bowel



A significant proportion of West Australians drink alcohol at high risk of long-term harm

1 in 6 (17.2%) 

West Australians aged 14+ drank more than 2 standard drinks per day on average in 2019.² This means that around **400,000** West Australians drank at levels considered to be harmful for their long-term health.

WA men are 2-3 times more likely 

than women to drink at levels considered risky for long-term health.^{2,3}

Alcohol contributes significantly to a wide range of chronic diseases in WA

Alcohol-caused cancers

including cancer of the **liver, breast, mouth** and **throat**; **chronic liver disease**; **coronary heart disease**; **stroke** and **epilepsy** are some of the most common long-term harms from alcohol.⁴

In 2018, West Australians were hospitalised **8045** times for long-term, alcohol-attributable conditions, equating to **22 per day**.

Each week in WA in 2012-13,

22 hospitalisations occurred due to **alcohol-caused cancers**,

26 due to **alcohol-caused cardiovascular disease**, and

31 due to **alcohol-caused digestive conditions** among people aged 15+ years.⁸

Alcohol use causes around



and



Alcohol causes around

3%

of all cancers, equivalent to **3500 cancer cases**, in Australia each year.⁵

We have lost many West Australians to alcohol-caused disease

In 2015,

193 people died from alcohol-related cancer,

88 from alcohol-related cardiovascular disease, and

82 due to alcohol-related digestive conditions in WA.⁸

In 2017,

7 people died each month

from alcoholic liver disease in WA (total 82 people died).⁹



The cost of long-term alcohol-related harm in Western Australia is high. In 2018, **35,671 bed-days** were used for long-term alcohol-related conditions in WA at a cost of

\$59.6 million.⁷



The more a person drinks, the higher their risk of alcohol-caused cancers



The link between alcohol and cancer has been known for a long time

When it comes to cancer risk, there is no safe level of alcohol use. The risk of cancer increases with increased alcohol use.¹⁰

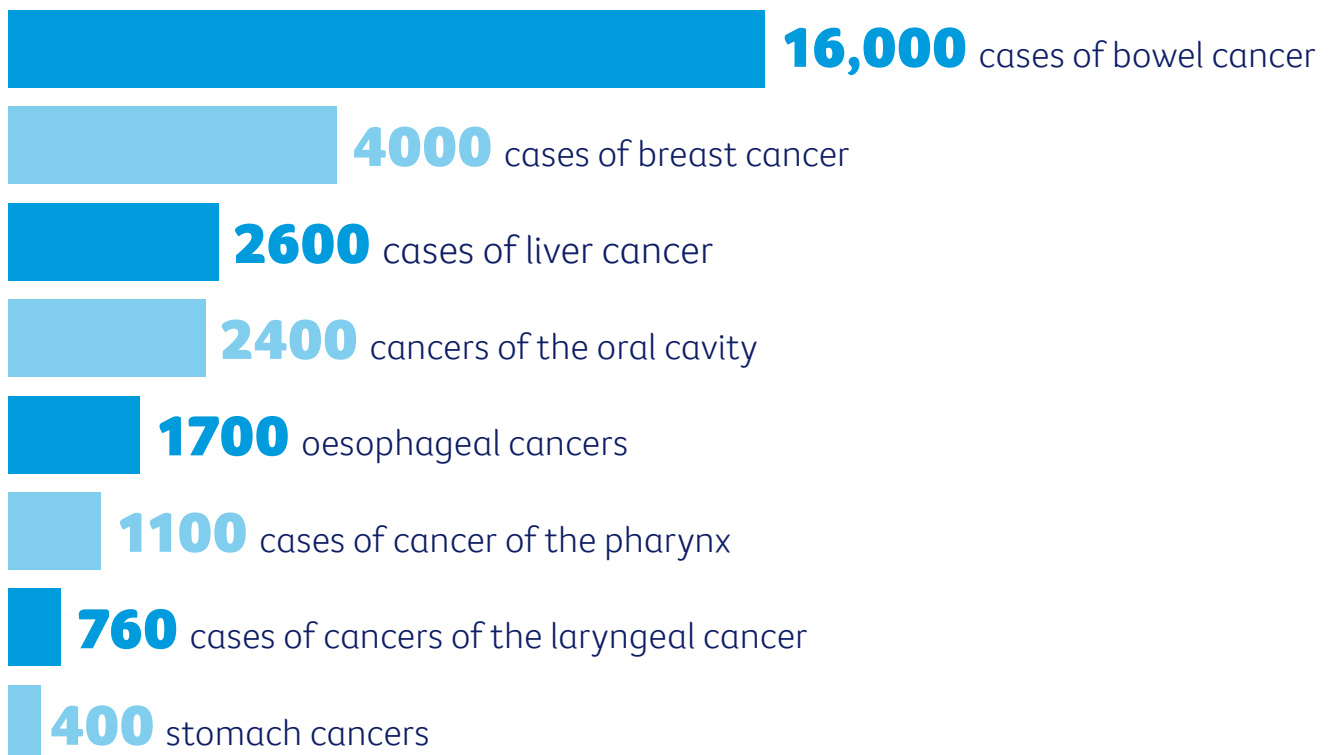
However, community awareness of the link between alcohol and cancer and the low-risk drinking guidelines is low

- Fewer than **3 in 10** (28%) West Australians are aware of the link between alcohol and cancer.¹¹
- While **72%** of WA adults are aware of the low-risk drinking guidelines, only **55%** know that 2 standard drinks is the maximum amount recommended to minimise long-term harm from alcohol.¹¹



Thousands of cancers could be prevented if no Australians drink above low-risk levels

Over the next 25 years, if no Australian drank more than 2 standard drinks per day these cancers could be prevented:¹²



References.

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- ⁵ Wilson LF, Antonnson A, Green AC, et al. How many cancer cases and deaths are potentially preventable? Estimates for Australia in 2013. International Journal of Cancer. 2018; 142(4): 691-701.
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- ¹¹ Kantar Public and Mental Health Commission. Alcohol Attitudes 2019: Adults Data Dictionary. Unpublished; 2019.
- ¹² Wilson LF, Baade PD, Green AC, et al. The impact of reducing alcohol consumption in Australia: an estimate of the proportion of potentially avoidable cancers 2013-2037. International Journal of Cancer. 2019; 145(11):2944-2953.