



邁 TOWARDS
向 2025

香港非傳染病防控策略及行動計劃
Strategy and Action Plan to
Prevent and Control NCD in Hong Kong

For Primary
Students

Uncovering Hidden Harms of Alcohol



#年少無酒
#YoungAndAlcoholFree



衛生署
Department of Health

Jul 2024 Edition

Don't be fooled



Can "moderate" drinking protect our heart?

It is still not sure whether moderate drinking is good for our heart. Drinking too much red wine or other types of alcohol can be harmful; **and lead to heart disease and cancers**. Will you drink a proven toxic substance to protect your heart?



Even a sip once in a while is not good for you!

The human brain does not stop developing up till the early 20s, drinking alcohol at an early age may **interfere with healthy brain development**. This in turn affects your memory, self-control and academic performance.

What does red face after drinking mean?

Red face after drinking is due to the deficiency of an enzyme which helps to break down alcohol. It is actually a sign of accumulation of harmful by-products of alcohol.



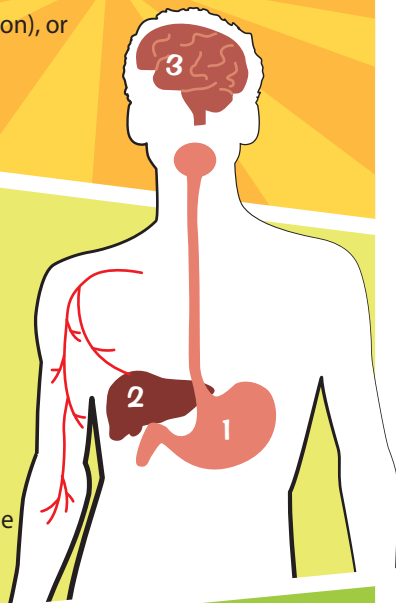
What is alcohol?

Alcohol (ethanol) is an ingredient in alcoholic drinks. It can lead to loss of self-control, drunkenness (i.e. confusion, unclear speech, loss of balance, dizziness, vomit and so on), or even death due to alcohol poisoning.



How does the body digest alcohol?

Alcohol can be quickly absorbed by the stomach and small bowel. **1** Then, it is carried by the blood to the liver for breakdown. **2** Alcohol that can't be broken down at once will be carried to other parts of the body, e.g. brain. **3** This will lead to drunkenness or death due to poisoning.



Types of Alcohol

Type	Shandy	Beer/ Alcopops	Red wine/ White wine/ Champagne	Spirits (e.g. Whisky/ Vodka/ Brandy)	Chinese spirits/ Chinese Baijiu
Alcohol content (% by volume)*	0.5%	5%	12%	40%	52%

Remark:* Approximate values only

Harms of alcohol

World Health Organization pointed out:

Lead to about

2,600,000

deaths in the world in 2019!



Lead to over **200**
disease and injury conditions

Like tobacco, alcohol is a
Group 1 cancer-causing agent and
can lead to **different cancers**

(There is no safe level of exposure to any cancer-causing agent, even a small amount of alcohol can lead to cancers. The more you drink, the higher the risk.)



Healthy liver



"Scarred" liver

Impact of alcohol drinking

Cancers of the oral cavity, throat, voice box and food pipe

Dementia, psychosis, depression, anxiety, stroke, impaired memory, alcohol dependence/addiction

Female breast cancer

High blood pressure, heart failure

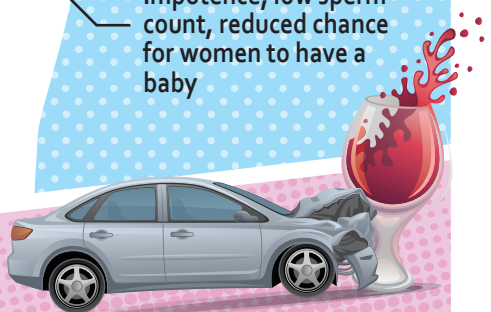
Fatty liver, inflammation of liver (hepatitis), "scarring" of liver (cirrhosis), liver cancer

Acute and chronic inflammation of stomach, stomach ulcer, acute inflammation of pancreas, cancer of the large bowel

Shaky hands, lack of sensation in fingers, tingling

Impotence, low sperm count, reduced chance for women to have a baby

Nervous system diseases, easy to fall



- Other serious problems, e.g. drunkenness, family violence, sexual assault, road traffic accidents, etc. Effects of alcohol on body vary from person to person — it's better not to drink.



7 ways to say **NO** to alcohol
Choose appropriate ways under different circumstances



1: Ignore the request

- Turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to the invitation.

2: Simply say no

- "No, thanks."

3: Give an excuse

- "No, I'm allergic to alcohol."
- "No, drinking harms our health."
- "No, I've something to do tomorrow."
- "No, I'm not feeling well today."
- "No, I don't like the taste of alcohol."

4: Find an ally to back you up

- "No, we both don't drink."

5: Suggest something else

- "Alcohol is expensive and unhealthy. Let's drink something else!"

6: Repeat your refusal

- "I said I don't drink."

7: Walk away from the situation

- Say: "Sorry, some urgent business suddenly come to mind" or "Sorry, my family is calling me", and walk away quickly.



Family agreement

Parents

- I/We promise not to drink alcohol in front of my/our children.
- I/We promise not to allow my/our children to drink alcoholic drinks.
- I/We promise not to bring my/our children to wine tasting exhibitions.
- I/We promise not to display alcohol prominently at home.
- I/We promise to discuss more about alcohol-related problems with my/our children.
- I/We promise to _____.
- I/We promise to _____.

Parent signature : _____

Date : _____

Students

- I promise not to drink alcohol; if someone offers me a drink, I will refuse firmly.
- I promise to discuss more about alcohol-related problems with my parents.
- I promise to suggest people around me reduce or quit drinking.
- I promise to _____.
- I promise to _____.

Student signature : _____

Counselling service

1. Tung Wah Group of Hospitals "Stay Sober, Stay Free" Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Treatment Service
Telephone : 2884 9876
Website : <http://atp.tungwahcsd.org>
2. Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Integrated Centre on Addiction Prevention and Treatment
Telephone : 2827 1000
Website : <http://icapt.tungwahcsd.org>

Relevant information

For more information, please visit "Change for Health" website of the Department of Health at www.change4health.gov.hk.





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Self-reflection for parents

Do you know the harms of alcohol?

Do you know whether they have drunk alcohol?

Have you ever drunk alcohol in front of your children?

Do you know how alcohol affects children?

Do you allow your children to drink alcohol?

Why do they drink alcohol?

Would they follow suit?



How much alcohol?

Which type(s) of alcohol?

With whom?

Parents underestimate their children's drinking...

44% of Grade 4 to 6 students had ever drunk alcohol, half of them first tried alcohol at the age of 8 or younger, but only 20% of parents thought their children had drunk alcohol before.

Source: Survey conducted by School of Public Health, HKU in 2013

Tips for parents

1. Establish good parent-child relationship so that children can share their problems with parents instead of relieving stress through alcohol. Discuss more about alcohol with children to understand their attitudes towards drinking and reduce their curiosity. For example:
 - Symptoms and misbehaviours when drunk.
 - Harms of alcohol to the body, family and society.
 - Let children understand that it is not necessary to do social drinking.
2. Set family rules with children about NO alcohol use and let them know that such rules are for their health.
3. Be aware whether children have friends who smoke, drink or have bad conduct.



4. Don't create an alcohol-friendly family
 - Be a role model and don't drink alcohol in front of your children.
 - Don't allow children to drink alcoholic drinks.
 - Don't allow children to eat food that contains alcohol, including liqueur chocolate and liqueur ice-cream.
 - Don't let children buy alcohol, open bottles or pour wine for you.
 - Don't provide alcohol to your children or display alcohol prominently at home.
 - Don't bring children to wine promotion activities (e.g. wine tasting exhibitions, cocktail making classes, wineries), and pay special attention and avoid exhibitions or promotions that link food with wine.





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