

## ADVICE AND SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE HERE

### Your healthcare centre

[www.regionjh.se](http://www.regionjh.se) / [1177.se](http://1177.se)

1177

[1177.se](http://1177.se) Refer to the tab Life and health  1177

### Alcohol helpline – free advice at

[alkohollinjen.se](http://alkohollinjen.se)



020-84 44 48

### Alcohol Help

[alkoholhjalpen.se](http://alkoholhjalpen.se)

Facts, tips and discussion forums.



Alkohollinjen and Alkoholhjälpen are available in several languages.

### Notes

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*This information is available in several language*

Advice and support for those who want to change.

# Alcohol and your health

This brochure has been produced by the Västra Götaland region.

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## HOW IS YOUR HEALTH AFFECTED?

It is difficult to know how much alcohol you can drink without increasing risks to your health. The more you drink, the greater the risk of becoming dependent on alcohol or suffering some sort of illness; there is no safe lower limit.

There are several symptoms and illnesses that may be related to a high. For example:

### Early signs

Injury through accidents.  
Social problems: at work, during studies or in relationships. High blood pressure.  
Sleeping problems or poor sleep. Worry, depression and anxiety.

### Later signs

Palpitations and irregular heart-beat.  
Infertility and impotence.  
Poor memory, dizziness and poor balance.  
Liver disease and cancer.  
Acid reflux and heartburn.  
Stomach and intestinal problems.

## What is high-risk alcohol consumption?

People have different sensitivity to alcohol. Medicines and illnesses can also affect how sensitive you are to alcohol. There is no clear lower limit when alcohol consumption is completely safe.

Pregnant women must not drink any alcohol to avoid unnecessary risks to the foetus.

If you are having an operation, you should not drink alcohol 4-8 weeks before and 4-8 weeks after the operation to reduce the risk of complications.

If you are having an operation soon, it is important to stop drinking during the time before the operation as well as after the operation.

Concerning illness and medicines, you should always consult your doctor about the risks associated with drinking alcohol.

**Talk to your healthcare contact about how alcohol can affect your health.**

To get a clear idea of your alcohol habits, we advise you to note how much alcohol you drink in a week and how much you drink each time.

A standard glass is a concept to compare different types of alcoholic drinks. For example, a standard glass is:



A light beer An export beer/cider A glass of wine Fortified wine Spirits e.g. whiskey (4cl)

At-risk consumption of alcohol in Sweden is now estimated at\*:

<b>Women</b>	> 9 standard glasses/week	≥ 4 standard
<b>Men</b>	>14 standard glasses/week	≥ 5 standard

\* New guidelines were adopted in Stockholm in 2018. The limit for low-risk alcohol consumption is 9 standard glasses per week and 3 standard glasses in one session, both for women and men. All consumption over these amounts results in a higher risk (at-risk consumption/harmful consumption/addiction).

## Changing alcohol habits

Three of four people at risk of developing a dependence on alcohol who have decided to change their drinking habits can manage it on their own. For some people it is not enough to try to drink less, but there are good methods and support is available in different forms.

### Tips to help you reduce your alcohol consumption

- Think about the advantages and disadvantages of your alcohol consumption at the moment, and how your health may be affected either now or in the future.
- Be open with others about wanting to drink less.
- Try to find activities that you don't associate with alcohol.
- Choose drinks with less alcohol.
- Don't drink any alcohol before and after a certain time.
- Make every second drink alcohol-free, either water or fruit juice.
- Avoid drinking alone or using alcohol to relieve physical or mental pain or sleeping problems.