

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

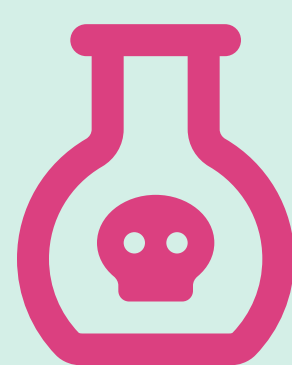
Fact sheet



60

Growing list of medical conditions due to alcohol

The list of alcohol related medical conditions has grown over the years and now includes more than 60 major types of health conditions.



Poison

Alcohol harms the human body

The toxicity of alcohol affects all tissues and organs of the human body.

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



Harm from different conditions

Alcohol harm far exceeds any assumed benefits

- Alcohol is a toxic substance with psychoactive properties and the capability to cause dependence among users along with a variety of other health conditions.
- Globally, about 3.3 million net deaths were caused by alcohol in 2012 (this estimate considered the assumed beneficial effect of low-dose alcohol consumption)
 - The estimated negative effect on the global burden of disease from alcohol is more than 30 times as large as the assumed beneficial effect.

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



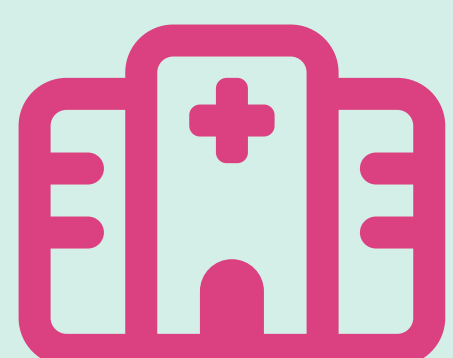
Rising global burden

In 2010, out of more than 60 risk factors, alcohol was ranked as the fifth leading cause of death and disability globally, up from eighth place in 1990

- The estimated burden of alcohol-related death, disease and disability has increased in the last decades.
 - This is greater than, for example, the proportion of deaths from HIV/AIDS (2.8%), violence (0.9%) or tuberculosis (1.7%).
 - Not all of the conditions linked to alcohol are included in these estimates, meaning the real alcohol burden is likely bigger.
- For people aged 15–49 years, alcohol is the leading health risk factor worldwide, followed by tobacco smoking, high blood pressure and high bodymass index.

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



NCDs

Alcohol fuels the NCDs burden

Alcohol produces a large chronic disease burden as a necessary cause of a large number of specific conditions, such as alcoholic liver cirrhosis and fetal alcohol syndrome.



Diseases

Alcohol causes many diseases

Alcohol is a causal factor in a large number of other disease conditions, such as cancers, cardiovascular disease, and infectious disease.

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

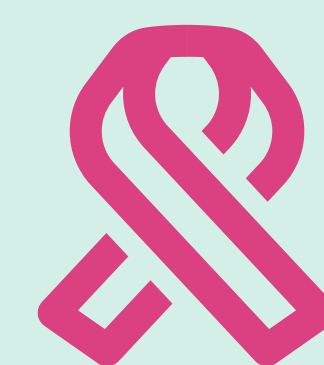
Fact sheet



Big

Already small alcohol amounts carry serious health risks

Low-dose alcohol use increases the risk for several chronic conditions, such as cancer and hypertension.



1988

Alcohol is carcinogenic to humans

Alcohol has been classified as carcinogenic to humans since 1988 by the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer, IARC. The cancer risk from alcohol increases with the amount of ethanol drunk, in the absence of any threshold below which no effect is evident.

THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



Cancer

Alcohol causes 7 types of cancer

Alcohol causes malignant tumours of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, as well as colorectal and female breast cancer.



Major risk

Already small alcohol amounts are major risks for injuries

Low-dose consumption increases the risk for several types of injuries, including transport injuries, falls, exposure to forces and other events, and injuries from interpersonal violence.



THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



No safe amount

For the majority of diseases linked to alcohol the risk increases with increasing consumption without a threshold under which there is no increased risk

- A meta-analysis from 2004 concluded e.g. that the risk of hypertension increased by 43% for a consumption of two standard alcoholic drinks per day;
- For the same level of alcohol use the risk for haemorrhagic stroke increased 19%; and
- The risk for liver cirrhosis was almost three times greater, compared to non-alcohol users.



THE EFFECTS OF LOW-DOSE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Fact sheet



Low-dose alcohol and injuries

Low-dose consumption increases the risk for several types of injuries

A study from a Swiss hospital emergency department of all types of injuries found that of alcohol related injuries, acute low-dose consumption (one unit or fewer of alcohol for women and two units or fewer for men) was related to:

- 50% of transport injuries,
- 44% of falls,
- 50% of exposure to forces and other events,
- 24% of injuries from interpersonal violence.

The same study showed that as percentage of all injuries, low-dose alcohol use was linked to:

- 21.5% of transport injuries,
- 22% of falls,
- 21% of exposure to forces and other events,
- 16% of injuries from interpersonal violence.