

# ALCOHOL USE AND COVID-19

Alcohol use may increase during times of hardship, as many people are experiencing right now. People may drink alcohol to try to cope with stress, negative emotions and our changing environment.

However drinking alcohol can undermine your immune system, cause physical and mental health problems, and increase the risk of injury and violence. As such, it is always best to limit your alcohol use, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Australia, the government recommendation is to consume no more than 10 standard drinks of alcohol a week and no more than 4 standard drinks in any one day, to reduce the risk of harms. It is best not to drink alcohol everyday, and if you are under 18 or pregnant you shouldn't drink at all.

Avoid stockpiling alcohol, as having a lot of alcohol in your home can increase your alcohol use, and the consumption of alcohol by others in your household.

## DOES ALCOHOL HELP STRESS + NEGATIVE MOODS?



Alcohol negatively affects mental health and can make you feel more depressed, anxious or stressed. If you are feeling this way seek help instead of a drink and call a mental health hotline (e.g. *BeyondBlue*, *Lifeline*).

## I AM WORRIED ABOUT MY OR SOMEONE ELSE'S DRINKING...



If you or someone close to you is drinking alone, finding it hard to cut down their alcohol use, getting into arguments with others, or not keeping up responsibilities, alcohol use may have become a health problem. Help is available 24/7 from the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline (1800 250 015). Alternatively you can speak to your GP, or chat to a counsellor online 24/7 at [www.counsellingonline.org.au](http://www.counsellingonline.org.au)

## HOW CAN I MODEL GOOD DRINKING BEHAVIOUR TO MY CHILDREN?



It is important to role model good coping strategies and healthy habits, as seeing how adults use alcohol can have a big influence on children's future drinking habits. In practice this means you should limit drinking in their presence and be careful not to portray alcohol as a way to deal with stress.

## WHAT IF I'M DRINKING BECAUSE I'M BORED OR LONELY?



There are healthier activities to relax and cope with how you are feeling. Stay connected with others by having virtual or phone catch-ups, listen to music, read a book, start something creative or try a new activity. Also remember to get outside to exercise.