

Alcohol and diabetes

- Alcohol can cause problems with your blood glucose (sugar) levels.
- Alcohol and certain diabetes tablets or insulin can cause hypos (low blood glucose).
- Alcohol can make you forget to eat or to take your medications or insulin.
- Alcohol is very high in calories and can make you put on weight.

Be Alcohol Smart

- If you drink beer, choose a low strength or light/lite beer.
- After a glass of alcohol have a glass of water.
- Use low kilojoule mixers like diet cola.
- Don't drink on an empty stomach. Eat something first like crackers or bread.
- Men should keep to less than two standard drinks per day.
- Women should keep to less than two standard drinks per day.

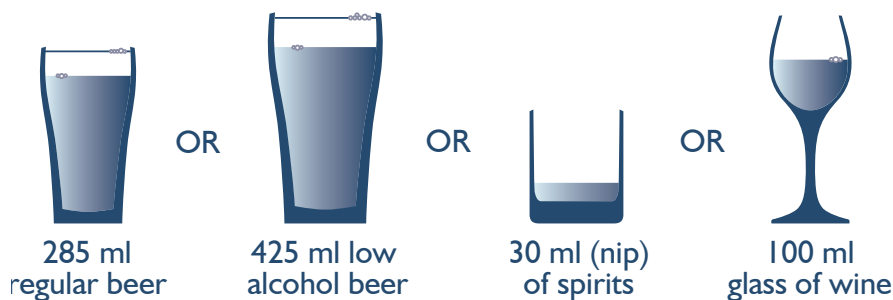
Tips for drinking less alcohol

- Drink water or diet soft drink before drinking any alcohol so that you're not thirsty.
- Sip alcohol slowly.
- Drink water or diet soft drink between each alcoholic drink.
- Dilute alcohol, like making a beer shandy by mixing beer with low kilojoule lemonade, or diluting wine with soda water.
- Drink low alcohol beer.

Don't drink alcohol every day.
Aim for at least two days a week without alcohol.

It is easy to be wrong about how much is a standard drink. Check the label on the bottle of wine or beer for the number of standard drinks it contains.

A standard drink is:



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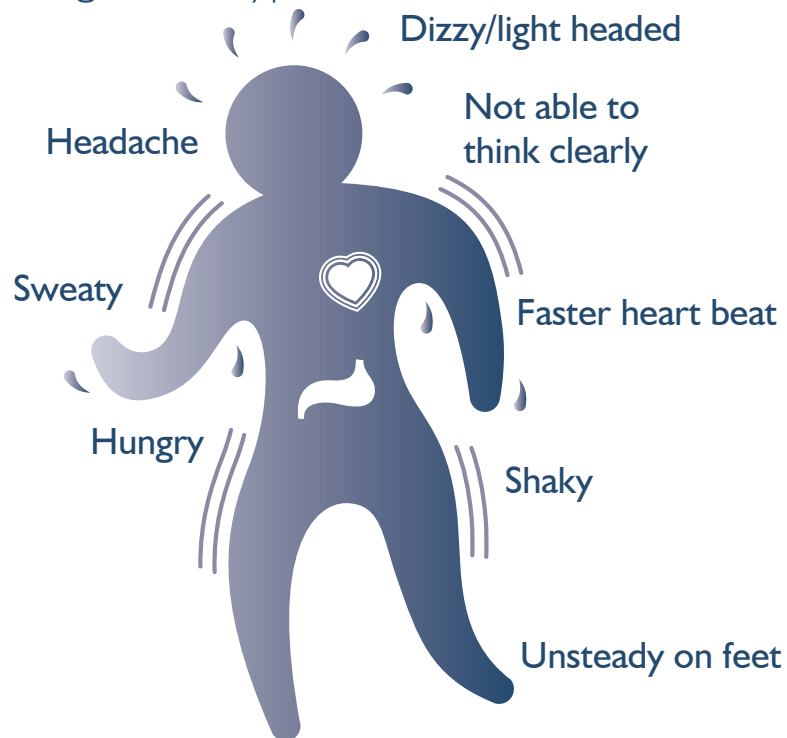
How can I avoid alcohol-related 'hypos'?

Hypos (low blood glucose levels) are more likely in people who take insulin or certain diabetes medication. Ask your health worker if this applies to you.

- Don't drink excessive amounts of alcohol. The more you drink the more you risk having a hypo.
- When drinking alcohol always tell someone that you have diabetes.
- Don't drink alcohol on an empty stomach.

- Make sure you eat carbohydrate foods before and while drinking alcohol, like potato or rice or pasta or bread.
- While drinking alcohol, especially in the evening, always eat a carbohydrate snack before you go to bed and eat breakfast as soon as you wake up in the morning.
- Test your blood glucose level before you go to bed.
- Always carry some fast-acting carbohydrate such as juice or jellybeans in case of a hypo.
- Don't drink alcohol after vigorous exercise.
- Always wear some form of diabetes identification.

Signs of a 'hypo'



"Hands on Country"

This painting was created for Australian Diabetes Council by artist Chris Tobin, a Dharug man, and a traditional custodian in the Blue Mountains region. In the artist's words: "The central part of this painting represents the relationship of the clan – it's a unity of people looking out for each other while living independent lives."

Need more information?
Call our customer care line on

1300 DIABETES
1300 342 238



Diabetes Australia – New South Wales
t/a Australian Diabetes Council

ABN 84 001 363 766 CHARITY NO. CFN12458

STREET ADDRESS
26 Arundel Street
Glebe NSW 2037

POSTAL ADDRESS
GPO Box 9824
Sydney NSW 2001

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CUSTOMER CARE LINE
1300 DIABETES
1300 342 238

FAX
+61 2 9660 3633
australiandiabetescouncil.com

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