

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Use in a safe environment with people that you trust.
- Alcohol lowers your inhibitions. Be aware of this and pace yourself to avoid making any decisions you may regret.
- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Consent: if anyone involved seems too drunk then they probably can't consent to sexual activity. If you've made a new friend but one or both of you are drunk, maybe just trade numbers and hook up when sober.
- Make sure that everyone involved in any sexual activity is as enthusiastic as you are before proceeding and throughout the experience.
- If you hook up with someone and one of you passes out, becomes incoherent or changes their mind, STOP!
- Plan your journey home when you go out drinking. Some options are having a designated sober driver, public transport, taxi or Uber, or sleeping at a mate's place until you're sober. remember you may still be over the limit the next morning.
- On average, a healthy person's liver can process about one standard drink per 60 - 90 minutes. Consider this before driving and ensure that your blood alcohol content (BAC) is below the legal limit.
- A general guide for remaining under the legal limit to drive is one standard drink per hour for women, or two standard drinks in the first hour and one standard drink every hour after that for men. This is a guide only!
- Everyone experiences alcohol intoxication differently; just because you are under the legal limit, does not necessarily mean you are sober enough to drive.
- Alcohol can remain in your bloodstream much longer than you realise, including the whole next day after a big session.
- Many festivals offer alcohol breath testing for patrons; if driving, it's a great idea to stop in for a test before leaving the event if you've been drinking that day or the night before.



MORE INFO

This resource is not a complete guide so do some further research. The following websites may help:

www.dancewizensw.org.au
www.nuaa.org.au
www.prism.org.au
www.erowid.org
www.hrvic.org
www.dancesafe.org
www.trippproject.ca
www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au

This resource has been developed for people who use or intend to use drugs. Our role is to provide factual, relevant and practical information so you can make informed decisions. We promote harm reduction and safer partying.

This resource has been developed and adapted by DanceWize NSW with support from DanceWize, Harm Reduction Victoria, PRISM, and DanceSafe.

DanceWize NSW is a program of NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA).



JUST SAY KNOW.



ALCOHOL

BOOZE, BREW, GROG, COLD ONE, DUTCH COURAGE, SAUCE, MOONSHINE, PLONK, GOON, PISS, DRINKS

Know your mind, know your body, know your substance, and know your limits

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant which means it slows your normal brain function and nervous system activity. In higher doses it can slow down breathing and heart rate, which can be dangerous.

Alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug in Australia, and the main active ingredient is ethanol. It is absorbed through the intestine and stomach, and it's the amount of alcohol (ethanol) you drink, not the overall volume of beverage consumed, which affects you. Beer usually has 3-5% ethanol and wine can have 11-15%, whereas spirits can have up to 40-50%.

Alcohol is often used in combination with other drugs. This can be risky as it interacts with the other drugs to create more intense, or unintended, effects.

In Australia, the legal age for drinking and buying alcohol is 18 years old. Tolerance can vary greatly from one person to another, based on body weight, age, recent meals, general health, and other factors including medications.

CHEMICAL COMPOUND

Ethyl alcohol (ethanol)

HOW IT'S TAKEN

Swallowed

DOSAGE AND SAFER USING TIPS

Taking drugs is never without risk. Information on dose and length of action are of a general nature. Each person's response to a drug will depend heavily upon individual factors such as body weight, kidney and liver function. Use caution when drinking, start low and go slow.

- Make sure you eat before drinking to avoid feeling sick.
- Always pour or order your own drink so you can keep track of what you are drinking.
- Use a nip-pourer if drinking spirits to accurately measure out one shot.
- Alternate water with each alcoholic drink you have, to prevent dehydration.
- Alcohol can be a volatile (and risky) drug to mix with other drugs; if you are going to take drugs, moderate your alcohol intake.
- It's safer not to drink if you are taking antipsychotics, antidepressants, some antibiotics, or other medications.
- Try not to mix different types of alcohol as this can make your hangover worse.

ROADSIDE DRUG TEST

Alcohol is detectable by roadside breath test, which measures the amount of alcohol in your breath. A breath test reading of 0.05 or higher is considered drink driving for fully licensed drivers in NSW (different limits apply for other licence types e.g. probationary or heavy vehicle). Remember this when planning your ride home from a festival or event.

DURATION OF EFFECTS

Total duration: 1.5 – 3 hours

Onset: 15-30 minutes

Peak: 15-90 minutes

Coming down: 45-60 minutes

Hangover/after effects: 1-36 hours dependent on dosage

 Seek help from onsite medical, DanceWize NSW or call 000 if experiencing adverse reactions

MOST COMMON EFFECTS*

Giddiness / Dizziness

Flushing of the face

Warming sensations

Pain relief

Reduced impulse control

Lowered inhibitions, impaired judgement

Decreased coordination

Difficulty focussing eyes

Frequent urination

Dehydration

Blackouts and memory loss in high doses ⚠️

Confusion

Nausea/vomiting ⚠️

Mild to severe hangover the next day

Tolerance due to repeated or regular use

Drowsiness/sleepiness

Happiness

Relaxation

Emotionally volatile – angry, depressed, aggressive, sad, etc ⚠️

'Beer Goggles' – others appear more attractive

*Effects vary greatly from one person to another.

LESS COMMON EFFECTS

Reduced ability to maintain erection/achieve orgasm

Depression/despair ⚠️

Increased response to sexual stimuli

Visual distortions at high doses

Fetal damage in pregnant women ⚠️

RARE EFFECTS

Coma and death at extremely high doses ⚠️

Brain damage and liver damage with extended use ⚠️

POSSIBLE LONG-TERM EFFECTS

These effects are possible with extended use

- Alcohol dependence
- Cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver
- Cancer (mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver)
- Heart and blood problems e.g. stroke and high blood pressure
- Stomach problems
- Lowered immune system
- Alcohol related brain injury
- Nerves problems in extremities

UNSAFE COMBINATIONS

Alcohol combined with...

- **Stimulants** = can lead you to drink more, increasing risk of alcohol poisoning.
- **Cocaine** = extends the effects of cocaine. Cocaine also reduces the intoxicating effects of alcohol, leading to potentially dangerous binge drinking.
- **Cannabis** = nausea and vomiting.
- **GHB** = very risky combination. Can result in an overdose leading to unconsciousness, nausea and vomiting, breathing complications, low blood pressure, and death.
- **Ketamine** = nausea, vomiting, amnesia, blackouts. Can also lead to breathing complications and low blood pressure.
- **Antibiotics/antidepressants/antipsychotics** = can counter the effects of the medication and increase the effects of the alcohol, leading to nausea and vomiting.
- **Benzodiazepines** = intensifies the effects of the alcohol and can lead to blackouts, breathing complications and low blood pressure, seizures, coma and in some cases, death.
- **Opioids** = drastically increases the risk of opioid overdose, coma and death.

Take a look at the TripSit drug combinations chart online, or in the DanceWize NSW chill space for info on other combinations.

 Alcohol use is not recommended if you have or have had:

- Liver problems
- Kidney problems
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Or if you are pregnant

Speak to your doctor for more info on drug combinations/health conditions. Speak to DanceWize NSW for referrals.