



SENSIBLE DRINKING GUIDELINES

Recommendations on drinking levels considered “minimum risk” for men and women exist in many countries globally. Official guidelines on alcohol consumption are usually produced by a government department, public health bodies, medical associations or non-governmental organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

- Official drinking guidelines are issued by governments and public health entities to advise on levels of alcohol consumption considered “safe”, “responsible,” or “low-risk”. They do not apply to those under the legal drinking age or to pregnant women. Those on medication or with a history of illness should consult their GP for specific advice. Some guidelines suggest one or two alcohol free days a week. Visit the websites cited for full country guidelines.
- Information included in guidelines offers recommendations on low-risk drinking levels for men and women, may also define a standard drink or unit (which differ in each country) and offer advice to particular populations deemed to be at an increased risk for harm.

Standard drinks summary

Official “drinks” or “units” generally contain between 8 and 14 grams of pure ethanol, although the measure varies among countries. - there is no consensus internationally on a single standard drink size.

Means of tracking how much alcohol people are drinking can be a useful tool for those serving alcohol, as well as for those consuming it. In a number of countries around the world, drinks are generally served in well-defined amounts at restaurants and bars. From a commercial perspective, this allows servers or retailers to monitor how much alcohol is being dispensed and ensures that drink sizes do not vary significantly across venues. For licensing authorities, standard measures are a useful tool for tracking sales. The sizes of servings are largely shaped by local customs and culture.

The strengths of different types of beverage alcohol vary significantly, and using standard measures allows for uniformity. Thus, in terms of the alcohol it contains, a standard drink or unit will be the same—regardless of whether it contains beer, distilled spirits, wine, or a mix of any of these beverages.

NB: Many countries have a maximum recommended gram intake per day without defining unit size – see below

International responsible drinking guidelines

Country	Unit/ standard drink	Recommended guidelines for adult 'low risk' consumption – maximum levels in grams of alcohol
Argentina	N/A	Some information via: www.vivamosresponsablemente.com
Australia	10g	Men: Max 4 drinks/day Women: 2 drinks/day Max 6 drinks any occasion Max 4 drinks any one day 1 or 2 alcohol-free days every week. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) http://www.nhmrc.gov.au and Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing http://www.alcohol.gov.au http://www.drinkwise.com.au/
Austria	10g	Men: 24g/day Women: 16g day Hazardous drinking: 60g 40g a day Source: Federal ministry for labour, health and social affairs: www.bmsg.gv.at
Belgium		There are no government guidelines
Canada	13.6g	Men: 2 units/day Women: 2 units/day 14 units max week 9 units max per week source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health: www.camh.net and http://www.educalcoool.qc.ca
Czech Republic	N/A	Men: 24g a day Women: 16g a day National Institute of Public Health www.szu.cz and http://www.forum-psr.cz/
Denmark	12g	Men: 21 units/week Women: 14 units/week National Board of Health www.sst.dk and http://www.goda.dk/
Finland	11g	Men: 15 units/week Women: 10 units/week Alko Inc www.alko.fi
France	10g	Men: 3 units/day Women: 2 units/day Based on WHO international guidelines cited by the Health Ministry visit: www.2340.fr
Germany	12g	Men: 3 units/day Women: 2 units/day www.drinkingandyou.com
Greece	10g	Men: 3 units/day Women 2 units/day Ministry of Health
Hong Kong	Defined as 'a drink'	Men: 3-4 units/ day Women 2-3 units/day Max 21/week Max 14 units/week Department of Health and Social Security
Hungary	N/A	Responsible drinking info via: http://www.hafrac.com
Indonesia	N/A	National Dietary Guidelines state: avoid drinking alcoholic beverages.
Iceland	N/A	Pregnant women are advised to abstain when pregnant or if breast feeding (Alcohol and drug abuse prevention Council)
Indonesia	N/A	The Ministry of Health national dietary guidelines state: 'avoid drinking alcoholic beverages'

Ireland	10g	Men: 21 units/week www.drinkaware.ie	Women: 14 units/week
Italy	12g	Men: 2-3 units/day Ministry of Health, more via: www.alcol.net	Women 1-2 units/day
Japan	19.75g	Men: 1-2 units/day Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Women N/A
Luxembourg		Moderate consumption is promoted without a precise definition.	
Malta	N/A	Responsible drinking guidelines via: http://thesensegroup.org	
Mexico		Responsible drinking advice via www.alcoholinformante.org.mx	
The Netherlands	10g	Men: 4 units/day www.stiva.nl and www.alcoholinfo.nl	Women: 2 units/day
New Zealand	10g	Men: 3 units/day Max 21 units/week Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council www.alcohol.org.nz	Women: 2 units day Max 14 units/week
Norway	N/A	Visit www.alkokutt.no	
Poland	10g	Men: 2 units/day 2 alcohol free days a week recommended PARPA www.parpa.pl	Women: 1 unit/day
Portugal	14g (unofficial)	Men: 2-3 units/day National Council on Food and Nutrition	Women 1-2 units/day
Romania	N/A	Men: 32.5g beer or 20.7g wine day (Ministry of health)	Women 32.5g beer or 20.7g wine day
Singapore	N/A	Limit alcohol intake to not more than 2 standard drinks a day (about 30g alcohol) (Ministry of Health National Dietary Guidelines)	
Slovenia	N/A	Men: 20g/day Max 50g on any one occasion (Institute of Public Health)	Women 10g/day max 30g on any one occasion
South Africa	N/A	Men max 21 units/week (South African National Council on alcoholism and Drug dependence) http://www.ara.co.za/	Women: 14 units/week
Spain	10g	Men: max 40g/day (Ministry of Health national plan on drugs) www.alcoholysociedad.org	Women: max 24g/day
Sweden	N/A	Men: max 20g/day (Swedish research council www.vr.se)	Women: max 20g/day
Switzerland	10-12g	Men: 2 units/day (Swiss Federal commission for Alcohol Problems)	Women: max 2 units/day
Taiwan	N/A	Responsible drinking information via: www.tbaf.org.tw	
Thailand	N/A	'Avoid or reduce the consumption of alcoholic beverages' (Ministry of Public Health)	
United Arab Emirates	N/A	No official guidelines. Alcohol available in hotels to guests and visitors. Expatriate residents must possess a liquor permit, available to non-Muslims. Retail outlets sell only to permit holders for personal consumption. Providing alcohol to others is forbidden.	

United Kingdom	8g	Men: 3-4 units/day max 21 units/week (Department of Health http://www.units.nhs.uk and www.drinkingandyou.com)	Women: 2-3 units/day max 14 units week
USA	14g	Men up to 2 drinks/day max 14 units a week Department of Agriculture & Department of Health & Human Services www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines and www.whatisadrink.com	Women 1 drink/day max 7 units/week

NB: Some countries are not listed, where the consumption of alcohol is forbidden for religious reasons for example.

For the many countries where there are no official Government guidelines, such as Belgium, China, Germany, Hungary, India or Russia for example, it is recommended that the Internationally recognised World Health Organisation low risk responsible drinking guidelines are followed. which are:

- (2) Women should not drink more than two drinks a day on average
- (3) For men, not more than three drinks a day on average
- (4) Try not to exceed four drinks on any one occasion
- (0) Don't drink alcohol in some situations, such as when driving, if pregnant or in certain work situations and abstain from drinking at least once a week.

Men or women who consistently drink more than these recommended levels may increase risks to their health.