

# Inu Ora

*Keeping Pasifika communities safe from alcohol related harm*



Le Va

✕ Inu Ora - translated means "Drink Life." The word 'Inu' meaning to drink is translated in a number of Pacific languages eg Samoan and Tongan. 'Ora' means life in the Cook Island language.

## Le Va

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# Know the facts about alcohol

Everyone can play a part in reducing the harm caused by alcohol in Pacific communities.

In this booklet...

*The amount of alcohol in a standard drink.  
Where to get help if you need it. How alcohol  
affects your family. How alcohol affects your body.*

# How does alcohol affect your body?

Alcohol enters the blood quickly after drinking and within minutes is spread throughout the body. It slows down how fast we can think, react and make choices. When we drink too much alcohol, it can make us clumsy and impulsive.

Women are more likely to feel the effects of alcohol more quickly than men, even if they are the same weight. This is because women tend to have more body fat and

less fluid in their bodies, so more alcohol gets into the bloodstream. This can lead to more risk of injury and harm.

After exercise our bodies need fluids, and before and during sports our bodies need natural sugars for energy. But alcohol flushes more fluids out from our body and slows down how our body makes sugar, meaning we have less energy.

# The impact of alcohol on the body

## Brain

Being drunk alters mood, impairs judgment and concentration, and in increasing amounts leads to drowsiness and coma. Long-term alcohol use can damage the brain and nerves, leading to pain, weakness, difficulty walking, epilepsy (chronic fits), sleep disturbances, memory loss and dementia (loss of mental ability due to death of brain cells).

## Liver

Long-term alcohol use can damage the liver, causing alcoholic hepatitis (acute injury to the liver occurring after prolonged heavy alcohol use), cirrhosis (where liver cells are damaged and replace by scar tissue) and cancer.

## Pancreas

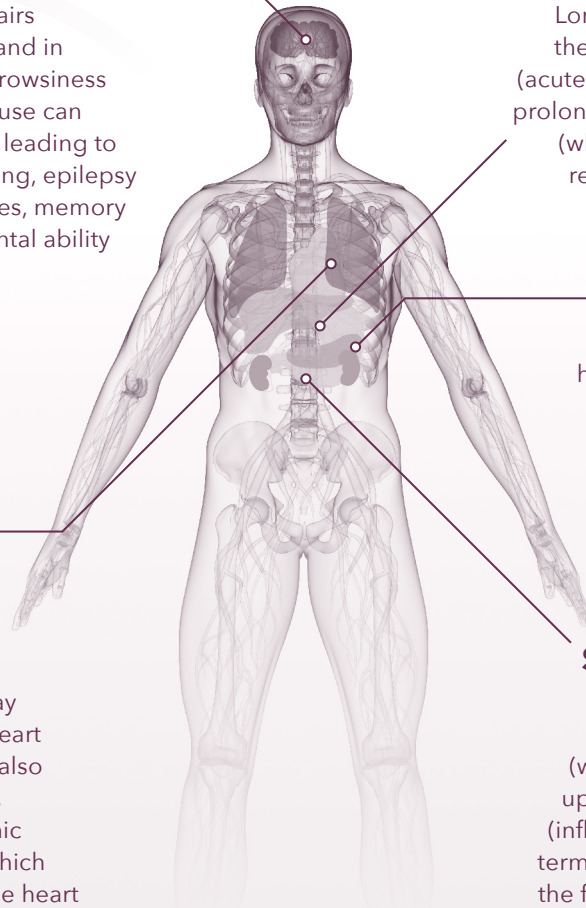
Alcohol use, particularly when heavy, can cause acute or chronic pancreatitis (inflammation and damage to the pancreas). Heavy alcohol use can also lead to dangerously low blood sugar or build up of acids in the body.

## Heart

Light to moderate alcohol use may reduce coronary artery disease (which can cause heart attacks) in some people, but heavy drinking may increase the risk of coronary heart disease. Heavy alcohol use is also associated with sudden death, irregular heartbeats and chronic disease of the heart muscle, which leads to heart failure, where the heart can no longer pump blood around the body effectively. Alcohol use can also be linked to high blood pressure.

## Stomach and food pipe

Being drunk can lead to nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea, reflux (when acid from the stomach rises up into the food pipe) and gastritis (inflammation of the stomach). Long term alcohol use can cause cancer of the food pipe (oesophagus). Chronic heavy alcohol use can lead to chronic gastritis and bleeding from the stomach and/or oesophagus.



# What are the risks of drinking?

*We don't know how much alcohol is safe to drink. There are short-term and long-term risks when drinking alcohol. If you are pregnant, or planning to get pregnant, there is no safe amount.*

## **To prevent health problems as you get older:**

- ✘ women should drink no more than **two standard drinks a day** and no more than 10 standard drinks a week
- ✘ men should drink no more than **three standard drinks a day** and no more than 15 standard drinks a week.

*AND have at least two alcohol-free days every week.*

## **Preventing injury:**

- ✘ women can reduce their risk of injury when drinking by having no more than **four standard drinks** at a time
- ✘ men can reduce their risk of injury when drinking by having no more than **five standard drinks** at a time.

*How much you drink is your choice. Know your limits and choose wisely.*

*“Drinking four standard drinks at a time doubles the risk of being injured in the following six hours.”*

Reduce your long-term health risks



No more than...

**2** **3**

STANDARD DRINKS STANDARD DRINKS

Daily

and no more than 10 a week and no more than 15 a week

And

at least 2 alcohol-free days per week

Reduce your risk of injury



No more than...

**4** **5**

STANDARD DRINKS STANDARD DRINKS

On any single occasion

Pregnant women



No alcohol

**0**

STANDARD DRINKS

There is no known safe level of alcohol use at any stage of pregnancy

# What is a standard drink?

It is the **amount of alcohol** we drink that affects us the most, not the type of alcohol.

Beer, wine and spirits have different amounts of alcohol. That's why we use '**standard drink**' as a simple way to work out how much alcohol we are drinking. All alcohol we buy in New Zealand is labelled with how many standard drinks it contains. So don't forget to read the label!

1 standard drink =  
10 grams of pure alcohol.





Each of these is a standard drink:

**Portion of pure alcohol**



30ml of straight  
40% spirits



330ml can  
of 4% beer



100ml glass  
of 12% wine

# How does alcohol affect families and communities?

*Adults are most likely to stop drinking alcohol because of family and social reasons.*

## Drinking and driving

Drinking alcohol affects how well you can drive. Research shows that there are still too many Pacific people drinking and driving. If you drink and drive you could harm yourself, your family or other people. If you get stopped by the police you will lose your licence. If you do it again, you could also end up in prison.

**In 2012 drinking drivers were involved in crashes that caused 93 deaths, 454 serious injuries and 1,331 minor injuries.**

## Drivers under 20 years of age are not allowed to drink any alcohol

The legal driving limit for adults over 20 years of age is that you must have under 250mcg of alcohol per litre of breath or 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

Because everyone is different it is difficult to say how much you could drink without being over the limit. If you are going to be driving it is safest not to drink at all.



**1,331**  
MINOR INJURIES

IN THE YEAR 2012...



**93** DEATHS



**454** SERIOUS INJURIES

### **Pregnant women**

Drinking any amount of alcohol during any stage of pregnancy can affect the baby and may lead to later problems with learning, behaviour and other serious health problems.

**There is no known safe level of alcohol use at any stage of pregnancy.**



### **Alcohol and crime**

Alcohol plays a part in a lot of serious crime in New Zealand - police attend an average of 340 crimes every day where alcohol is involved. For some people, being drunk can lead to increased aggression, and this can lead to family violence, with our partners and children, and violent fights at home and with extended family, in bars and on the streets. Adults are most likely to stop drinking alcohol because of family and social reasons.

### **Alcohol, mental health and suicide**

Among our Pacific people who have alcohol and or drug use problems, many have other problems like depression and anxiety. Using alcohol to relieve stress or anxiety does not help in the long-term. Heavy or regular drinking affects judgment and can increase depression. Alcohol can also be involved with suicide and suicide attempts.

### **Pacific young people**

In New Zealand it is illegal to buy alcohol if you are under the age of 18. Pacific young people under the age of 15 are at the greatest risk of harm from alcohol. Young people have lower tolerance to alcohol, their brains are still developing and can be harmed, and they are at high risk of unwanted sex, physical assault, accidents, and other injury.

**It is safest if this age group does not have access to alcohol.**

*“Half of all alcohol-related deaths are from accidents or self-harm (suicide).”*

### **Did you know?**

In New Zealand it is illegal to buy alcohol if you are under the age of 18. New laws mean that before you supply alcohol to anyone under 18, you must get permission from their parent or legal guardian. Otherwise, you are breaking the law!

**Everyone can play a part in reducing the harm caused by alcohol in Pacific communities.**



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For young people needing help:

**Suicide Prevention Helpline (TAUTOKO)**  
0508 828 865  
(12 noon to 12 midnight 7 days a week)

**Youthline**  
Free text 234  
0800 376 633

# Reducing the harmful impacts

*It is safest not to drink alcohol, but if you choose to, here are some tactics to help you stay in control:*

- ✘ Try a spacer not a chaser – try 1-2 glasses of water after every alcoholic drink.
- ✘ Drink slowly – take small sips and put your glass down rather than holding it.
- ✘ If you are going out, always plan your ride home at a certain time – have a designated sober driver or arrange to share a taxi with friends.
- ✘ Don't mix your drinks.
- ✘ Eat before or while you are drinking.
- ✘ Set limits for yourself and stick to them – practice ways of turning drinks down.
- ✘ Know how much you drink – know what a standard drink is and keep track of how much you drink, daily and weekly.
- ✘ Be a responsible host – especially supervising young people. Provide lots of food and activities other than eating and drinking.
- ✘ Try low alcohol beer or wine.
- ✘ Never drink and drive.

*“Talk to your family about the safe use of alcohol. Never drink when pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.”*



# How to get help

There are many organisations that can help you, your family and your friends. There are some Pacific services focussed on helping with alcohol and drug issues.

These helplines will let you know how to contact Pacific alcohol and drug services.

**Alcohol/drug helpline**  
*freephone 0800 787 797*

**Pacific alcohol/drug helpline**  
*freephone 0800 787 799*

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If you want more information about alcohol, contact the Health Promotion Agency on **(04) 917 0060** or go to **[www.alcohol.org.nz](http://www.alcohol.org.nz)**



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Matua Raki

National Addiction Workforce Development

[www.matuaraki.org.nz](http://www.matuaraki.org.nz)



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