



Alcohol consumption

Extracted from *Australia's health 2010*

Pages 55–59

Excessive alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for a variety of health problems such as stroke, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, some cancers, and pancreatitis.

The impact of alcohol in Australia can be described in terms of social costs. In 2004/05, the total social costs of alcohol amounted to \$15.3 billion, the majority (71%) being for tangible costs including costs associated with lost productivity, road accidents and crime.

In young people

Estimates suggest that in 2007 around two-thirds of those aged 12–15 years had never had a full serve of alcohol. Around 1 in 50 drank at least once a week, and 1 in 4 drank less often than weekly.

Among those aged 16–17 years, 20.3% had never had a full serve of alcohol. The majority of this age group (57.0%) drank less frequently than once a week. Few (0.8%) young people aged 16–17 years drank daily, compared with 7.9% of the Australian population aged 12 years and over.

Generally, greater proportions of young females drank at risky or high-risk levels compared with young males. Levels of risky alcohol drinking among young people have been relatively stable between 2001 and 2007. Similarly, young people's choice of product has been stable over that period, with the youngest drinkers preferring spirits.

Prevalence of risky drinking

