



Folkhälsomyndigheten  
PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF SWEDEN

# Alcohol affects you and those around you

Alcohol has physical, mental and social consequences for both the drinker and others.

## Alcohol affects the body in many ways

The more alcohol you drink, the higher the risk of disease and poor health. But even small amounts can affect the body and increase the risk of certain medical conditions, such as cancer. How much you drink on each occasion also matters.

Medical conditions that are fully or partially attributable to alcohol include:

- high blood pressure and stroke
- several types of cancer
- stomach inflammation and liver damage
- early onset dementia
- alcohol dependence.

## Alcohol affects more people than just the drinker

Many people have, at some point, been negatively affected by other people's drinking. Children may feel worried or unsafe when adults drink alcohol.

## Some situations are riskier than others

Alcohol affects the brain in many ways, such as sleep, judgement, reaction time and memory.

The risk of accidents and violent crime increases when drinking. The risk of alcohol-related harm is higher if you

- **are young** since the brain is still developing and is more sensitive to alcohol
- **take certain medicines** since alcohol may alter the effect of the medicine
- **are older** since the body changes and the same amount of alcohol can have more detrimental effects than before.

## There are situations when you should avoid alcohol completely

This applies when you

- **are pregnant** since alcohol may harm the foetus
- **are driving** since alcohol impairs your ability to drive
- **are having surgery** since alcohol increases the risk of complications.

## More information and support

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking, you can contact an alcohol helpline in your country.

In Sweden, you can talk anonymously with professional alcohol counsellors.

[www.alkoholhjalpen.se/english](http://www.alkoholhjalpen.se/english)  
+46 20-84 44 48

You can also get advice and support from your primary health care provider.

