Short-term effects of drinking alcohol*

**Brain and nervous system**
- Thought processes, judgement and concentration are impaired
- Mood changes
- Loss of memories (blackouts)
- Disrupted sleep

**Eyes**
- Blurred or double vision

**Mouth and throat**
- Slurred and confused speech

**Blood and circulation**
- Alcohol levels in the blood rise
- Alcohol moves rapidly to all parts of the body, including to an unborn baby

**Liver**
- Breaks down alcohol at an average rate of one standard drink per hour

**Kidneys and fluid balance**
- More urine is made
- Loss of minerals and salts
- Dehydration

**Bones and muscles**
- Clumsiness and difficulty walking
- Broken bones, sprains, cuts, bruises and internal injuries (from falls, assaults and traffic crashes)

**Whole of body**
- Coma and death from alcohol poisoning
- Death from injuries
- Existing health conditions made worse
- Interactions with other drugs/medicines
- Alcohol breakdown products used for energy

*The likelihood of experiencing these effects varies depending on the amount, the strength and how quickly alcohol is consumed, and on individual factors, such as body type, age and gender.

For more information, go to [alcohol.org.nz](http://alcohol.org.nz)