Long-term health effects of drinking alcohol*

**Whole of body**
- existing health conditions made worse, such as mental illness and diabetes
- death from injury or disease

**Mental health and addiction**
- mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety
- alcohol dependence

**Brain and nervous system**
- brain damage
- memory loss
- disrupted sleep
- stroke (bleeding on the brain)
- nerve damage

**Mouth, throat and voicebox**
- cancer

**Lungs**
- inflammation, usually from infections

**Breasts**
- cancer (in women)

**Liver**
- swelling and pain
- alcoholic liver disease, such as cirrhosis
- cancer

**Blood and immune system**
- changes in red and white blood cells
- anaemia
- less ability to fight off infections

**Skin and fat**
- yellowing of skin and spider veins
- potential weight gain

**Bones and muscles**
- weakness
- muscle wasting

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For more information, go to alcohol.org.nz

*Risk of developing these health effects varies depending on the amount and frequency of alcohol consumed and individual factors.