How many standard drinks are there in what I'm drinking?

Before you drink, check the label for the standard drinks content. It will tell you approximately how many standard drinks there are in that bottle, can or case.

In pubs or bars, the serving sizes are usually consistent – at home, you are probably pouring different amounts every time. But, by checking the standard drinks label, you’ll have a good idea of how many drinks you should be serving out of each bottle.

For example, if the standard drinks label on a bottle of wine says it contains eight standard drinks, and that bottle has only filled four big glasses, each of those glasses contains approximately two standard drinks or 20 grams of pure alcohol. If you pour six glasses from the same bottle each glass contains approximately 1.3 standard drinks or 13 grams of pure alcohol. Simple!

Because wines have different amounts of alcohol in them, not all bottles of wine will contain eight standard drinks. Some will be less, some more. Check the label.

Where do I look?

You’ll find the standard drinks content on the label of each bottle, can or case. If the label shows that your bottle of beer contains 1.5 standard drinks then you are drinking 15 grams of pure alcohol. If a bottle of spirits contains 32 standard drinks and you pour it into 16 glasses, each glass will contain 2 standard drinks, even if you add a mixer to it.

What are standard drinks?

Standard drinks measure the amount of alcohol, not the amount of liquid you’re drinking. If you drink:

1000ml bottle of spirits at 43% alcohol

It’s not the amount of liquid you’re drinking that’s important – it’s the amount of alcohol.

Standard drinks – know how much alcohol you’re really drinking

The standard drinks measure is a simple way to work out how much alcohol you are drinking, at all bottles of wine, beer and spirits, and all cans or cases now have standard drinks content on the label – so you can easily tell how many standard drinks there are in what you’re drinking.

For help contact the Alcohol Drug Helpline on 0800 727 797 or txt adh to 234 to order resources visit alcohol.org.nz and go to Order Resources
A quick guide to how much alcohol you’re drinking

The following is a guide to how many standard drinks there are in a whole range of drinks – so you can easily see how much alcohol there is in your choice of drink.

This is only a guide. Always check the label to be sure of how many standard drinks you are drinking.

For help
Contact the Alcohol Drug Helpline on 0800 787 797 or txt adh to 234 10am – 10pm, seven days a week.