TAKE A MOMENT
Understanding Alcohol Harm

Asian Family Services

Self-Reflection Booklet

For Asian individuals to explore
alcohol use, wellbeing, and support



Contents

About this booklet	3
What happens when we drink?	4
Alcohol and your body	5
How many standards drinks?	7
A quick check-in about your drinking	8
Your current drinking patterns	9
Why consider a different choice?	12
Harmful drinking	13
Safe drinking tips	14
Alcohol and the Law in New Zealand	18
Main ways to find support	20
Knowledge test	22

Every person deserves care, respect, and support, wherever they are in their journey.

About this booklet

A private space to pause and reflect

This booklet is for you if you want a safe, private way to think about alcohol and how it may be affecting your life.

You may be thinking about your own drinking, supporting someone you care about, or simply wanting clearer information. Awareness can help, but change can also depend on support, safety, time, money, health, family responsibilities, and what is happening around you.

Use these pages to notice patterns, explore what matters to you, and identify support or actions that could protect your health, relationships, culture, family, and future.

There are no right or wrong answers. Go at your own pace, pause when you need to, and choose what feels useful. You can write in the booklet or reflect privately.

Small reflections can be a form of self-care. If alcohol-related harm is affecting you or someone close to you, you do not have to manage it alone. Asking for support is a strong and caring step.

> **There are no right or wrong answers in this booklet. The goal is not perfection – it is awareness.**

What happens when we drink?

What do you notice?

Think about a recent time when you drank alcohol.
What did you notice in your body, thoughts, mood, behaviour, or relationships during the next few hours?

Your reflection:

Looking over a longer period, have you noticed any changes in your health, sleep, money, work or study, family life, or relationships?

Alcohol can affect people in different ways depending on factors such as age, body size, health, medications, how much is consumed, and how quickly it is consumed.

Alcohol and your body

A quick overview

After a few drinks, you may feel:

- Relaxed
- Happy
- More confident
- More social

As you continue to drink, alcohol may cause:

- Poor judgement
- Slower reaction times
- Difficulty walking or seeing clearly
- Nausea
- Disrupted sleep
- Memory problems or blackouts
- Mood changes
- Loss of control
- Accidents or injuries

Over time, regularly drinking more than two standard drinks a day may affect:

- Physical health
- Mental wellbeing
- Relationships
- Family life
- Work or study performance
- Financial wellbeing

Did you know?

In 2024/25, **74.9% of New Zealand adults** had consumed alcohol in the past year. 1 in 6 NZ adults **(16.6%)** were classified as hazardous drinkers, and **8.2%** drank six or more drinks on one occasion at least weekly.

Among Asian adults in 2024/25, **7.3% of men** and **1.4% of women** were classified as hazardous drinkers.

Source: Ministry of Health, New Zealand Health Survey 2024/25. Adults are people aged 15 years and over.

Understanding standard drinks in New Zealand

Alcohol comes in many forms. Because different drinks contain different amounts of alcohol, it can sometimes be difficult to know how much alcohol you are actually consuming.

To help people understand and compare different types of alcohol, New Zealand uses the concept of a standard drink. A standard drink contains approximately 10 grams of pure alcohol, regardless of the type of beverage.

This means:

- One drink does not always equal one standard drink.
- Different drinks may contain different amounts of alcohol.
- A larger serving or stronger alcohol content means more standard drinks.

Why is this important?

Understanding standard drinks can help you:

- Make informed decisions about drinking
- Better understand how much alcohol you are consuming
- Reduce the risk of alcohol-related harm
- Plan ahead for social events and celebrations
- Avoid unintentionally drinking more than you intended

> **What's the legacy you want to leave behind?**

How many standards drinks?

In New Zealand, 1 standard drink = 10g pure alcohol.
Estimates only – check the label.

Drink		Common Serve	Approx. Standard Drinks
	Whisky, Vodka, Gin, Scotch, Tequila, Rum	30ml shot (40%)	**About 1.0**
	Wine	100ml glass (13%)	**About 1.0**
		150ml glass (13%)	**About 1.5**
	Beer Lager	330ml bottle (4.8–5%)	**About 1.2–1.3**
	Corona-Style Lager	355ml bottle (5%)	**About 1.3**
	Kingfisher-Style Lager	330ml bottle (5%)	**About 1.3**
	Soju	360ml bottle (13–20%)	**About 3.7–5.7**
		180ml serve (15%)	**About 2.1**
	Sake	30ml shot (40–55%)	**About 1.0–1.3**
	Baijiu	30ml shot (40–50%)	**About 1.0–1.3**
	Country Liquor/ Rice Wine	100ml serve (20–40%)	**About 1.6–3.2**

The number of standard drinks changes with the serve size and alcohol percentage.

A quick check-in about your drinking

(You do not need to share your answers)

How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Monthly or less
- ☐ 2–4 times a month
- ☐ 2–3 times a week
- ☐ 4 or more times a week

How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

- ☐ 1–2
- ☐ 3–4
- ☐ 5–6
- ☐ 7–9
- ☐ 10 or more

How often do you have six or more standard drinks on one occasion?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Less than monthly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Daily or almost daily

Your current drinking patterns

Think about your usual drinking

When and why am I most likely to drink? (Tick all that apply.)

- ☐ Celebrations or special occasions
- ☐ Family gatherings
- ☐ Social events with friends
- ☐ Work events
- ☐ At home after work
- ☐ To relax or unwind
- ☐ When stressed or worried
- ☐ When lonely or isolated
- ☐ To feel connected or included
- ☐ To feel more confident socially
- ☐ Because of cultural, family, or social traditions
- ☐ Out of habit or routine
- ☐ To sleep better
- ☐ Other: _____

Did you know?

Understanding your current drinking patterns is an important first step towards making informed choices about your health and wellbeing.

How does alcohol affect me and the things I care about?

_____

_____

What would I like to change or get support with?

_____

_____

_____

Pressure or choice?

Sometimes drinking feels like a personal choice. Other times, it can feel more like an expectation influenced by the situation or people around us.

Think about where your experiences might sit:

More like a choice (I want to drink)	More like pressure (I feel I should drink)
I choose to drink to relax	Everyone else is drinking
I enjoy the taste/experience	I don't want to feel left out
I decide when and how much	I feel it's expected
It fits what I want to do	It feels hard to say no

Your experience may sit somewhere between choice and pressure, and it may change in different situations.

Pause and reflect

Pressure can come from people, culture, work, family expectations, fear of being left out, stress, or a lack of safe alternatives. It is not always easy – or safe – to choose differently.

- When does drinking feel like my choice, and when does it feel expected?
- What makes it harder for me to say no, drink less, leave early, or choose an alcohol-free option?
- What would help me feel safer, more supported, or more in control in those situations?
- Who could support my choice without judging or pressuring me?

Something to keep in mind

Your reasons for drinking may change with your life, situation, relationships, and environment. Understanding them is not about judgement; it can help you recognise what you need and what choices or support may protect your wellbeing.

You may be drinking for connection, celebration, belonging, sleep, relief from stress, or because it has become part of a routine. Whatever your reasons, you deserve information and support that respects your culture, circumstances, and choices.

You are not alone

Below are some real-life thoughts shared by people with lived experience. You may recognise some of them – or your experience may be different.

- *"After work or study, I need something to help me switch off."*
- *"I feel more relaxed when I drink with others."*
- *"It is easier to fit in when everyone else is drinking."*
- *"At gatherings, drinking feels expected."*
- *"I drink when I feel lonely, homesick, or disconnected."*
- *"It helps take the edge off stress for a while."*
- *"Sometimes it has simply become a habit."*

Which experience feels familiar to you? What would help in that moment?

Why consider a different choice?

You may want to try different choices if alcohol is affecting your:

Health, Mood, Relationships, Work or Study, Money, Sense of control

Change does not have to mean stopping.

It can mean:

- Drinking less
- Drinking less often
- Planning ahead
- Finding other ways to relax or connect

Even small steps can make a big difference.

Key facts about alcohol

Alcohol affects each person differently

Age, body size, health, medicines, food, stress, how quickly you drink, and genetics can all change the effect. Comparing your drinking with someone else's does not tell you what is safe for you.

Taste does not show how much alcohol is present

A sweet, mixed, or mild-tasting drink can still contain more than one standard drink.

The type of drink is not the main issue

Beer, wine, spirits, soju, sake, rice wine, and other drinks can all add up. Check the label and count standard drinks.

Signs that extra support may help

These can include needing more alcohol for the same effect, feeling shaky or anxious when not drinking, finding it hard to stop, drinking to cope, or continuing despite harm to health, relationships, money, work, or study. These are health signs – not a personal failure. A GP, counsellor, or alcohol and drug service can help you talk through what is happening.

Harmful drinking

Binge drinking

Binge drinking means drinking a lot of alcohol in a short time. It can cause blackouts, memory loss, anxiety, or an irregular heartbeat. Over time, it can lead to longterm or permanent health problems.

Hangover

A hangover can happen after heavy drinking. A person may feel dehydrated, sick, tired, have a headache, or become easily irritated. Severe symptoms, such as confusion, vomiting, seizures, slow breathing, or unconsciousness, may be signs of alcohol poisoning and need urgent help.

Driving after drinking

Driving after drinking is unsafe and illegal. Alcohol slows reaction time, affects judgement, and makes it harder to notice danger on the road. In New Zealand, around 100–170 people die each year in crashes involving alcohol or drugs.

Alcohol and pregnancy

Alcohol is not safe during pregnancy. In New Zealand, the safest advice is not to drink at any time during pregnancy or when trying to become pregnant. Alcohol can pass through the placenta and harm the developing baby.

Safe drinking tips

Tick any actions you would like to try

Choose what feels realistic for you; you do not need to do everything.

☐ **Notice the effects**

Notice how alcohol affects your body, mood, sleep, and decisions.

☐ **Pace yourself**

Drink slowly and have water or an alcohol-free drink between alcoholic drinks.

☐ **Avoid risky mixes**

Avoid drinking games and mixing alcohol with drugs, energy drinks, or medicines that interact with alcohol.

☐ **Stop if you feel unwell**

Stop drinking if you feel unsteady, confused, very emotional, or unable to focus.

☐ **Keep children safe**

If caring for children, make sure one trusted adult stays alcohol-free, alert, and able to respond.

☐ **Ask for support**

Ask a trusted person or support service for help if alcohol is becoming hard to manage.

☐ **Set your limit**

Decide before you start how much you want to drink.

☐ **Eat first**

Eat before and while drinking.

☐ **Count standard drinks**

Check the label and count standard drinks.

☐ **Plan a safe way home**

Do not drive, cycle, or use machinery after drinking.

☐ **Try another way to unwind**

Try walking, music, sport, prayer, hobbies, calling someone, or sharing food.

Looking ahead

If nothing changed, what might life look like in the future?

If you drank less, stopped, or had more support, what might become possible?

What feels most important to you right now?

Low-risk drinking advice for adults

To reduce your long-term health risks		To reduce your risk of injury		Pregnant women
Women	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	
Daily no more than...		On any single occasion no more than...		No alcohol
2 Standard Drinks	**3 Standard Drinks**	**4 Standard Drinks**	**5 Standard Drinks**	**0 Standard Drinks**
and no more than...				There is no known safe level of alcohol use at any stage of the pregnancy
10 a week	**15 a week**			
and				
at least 2 alcohol-free days per week				

Low risk does not mean no risk. Some people should not drink, including people who are pregnant or planning pregnancy, under 18, taking medicines that interact with alcohol, or doing anything that requires skill or alertness.

You do not need to guess. Check the standard-drinks statement on the bottle, can, or cask. One serving can contain more than one standard drink, especially with strong drinks or large home pours.

Counting standard drinks can help you plan, notice how much alcohol you have had, and think about when it may be safe to drive again. Alcohol can remain in your body into the next day. Do not rely on counting alone to decide that you are safe to drive; the safest choice is not to drink before driving.

My plan:

Choose any actions that feel useful now. You can start anywhere, choose more than one, or return to this page later. Include the support or resources you may need.

An action I will take:

Another action I may take:

Support or resources that could help:

A person I can talk with:

What I will do if things feel difficult:

Alcohol and the Law in New Zealand

These key facts can help you make informed choices and protect yourself, your family, and your community.

Young people

- Under 18s cannot legally buy alcohol.
- Alcohol supplied to under 18s must be given responsibly by a parent or legal guardian, with appropriate supervision.

Drink-driving

- Alcohol affects judgement, concentration, coordination, and reaction time. Counting standard drinks can help you estimate how much alcohol you have had, but it cannot prove that you are safe to drive. Alcohol can remain in your body into the next day.
- Under 20: zero alcohol limit for driving.
- The safest option is always not to drink and drive.

Alcohol-free areas

- Drinking or carrying open alcohol in liquor ban areas may lead to a $250 fine.
- Alcohol-free areas can include city centres, parks, beaches, streets, car parks, inside parked cars, event areas, and some public spaces.
- Alcohol may also be restricted in schools, workplaces, and workplace events. These rules help keep children, staff, customers, and communities safe.

You can find more info through Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora website https://resources.alcohol.org.nz/alcohol-management-laws/nz-alcohol-laws

Getting Support: Safe, Private, and Respectful

If you are worried about your drinking or someone else's, you can ask for information without committing to treatment. You can start with the Alcohol Drug Helpline or use Healthpoint to find a service near you.

What you can ask for

- An interpreter or support in a language you understand.
- Clear information about privacy, cost, eligibility, and what will happen next.
- Help for yourself or someone you care about.
- A culturally responsive service or a local community alcohol and drug service.

Did you know?

False ID, underage alcohol purchase, and liquor ban breaches can each lead to a $250 fine. Irresponsible supply to minors may lead to a fine of up to $2,000.

Main ways to find support

Alcohol Drug Helpline

Free and confidential support, information, and referral throughout New Zealand.

Call **0800 787 797** or text **8681**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Healthpoint

Search Mental Health & Addictions services by location, programme type, language, cost, and referral pathway at **healthpoint.co.nz.**

CADS Auckland

Free alcohol and other drug support for people in the Auckland region and for family or friends concerned about someone else.

Call **0800 845 1818**. Outside Auckland, use the Alcohol Drug Helpline or Healthpoint to find your local community service.

Peer and online support

- **SMART Recovery Aotearoa:** Peer support meetings, including New Zealand meetings and online meetings across Australia and New Zealand. Visit **smartrecovery.org.nz**.
- **Living Sober:** A free, supportive online community for people changing their relationship with alcohol. Visit **livingsober.org.nz**.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): 0800 229 6757**.
- **Al-Anon / Alateen:** 0508 425 266 for people affected by someone else's drinking.



If someone is in immediate danger

Call 111 if someone is unconscious, struggling to breathe, having a seizure, or may harm themselves or someone else.

Seeking support is a sign of strength. Early help can reduce harm, improve wellbeing, and support you, your family, and your community. You do not have to go through this alone.

Asian Family Services

Asian Family Services (AFS) offers free, private, culturally responsive support for Asian communities in New Zealand.

Phone: **0800 862 342**

Website: **www.asianfamilyservices.nz**

Languages: Services available in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, and Hindi.

Support includes: counselling, health advice, addiction support, and wellbeing support.

Scan the QR-code to share your thoughts and win $50 wellbeing pack!

Knowledge test

1.
Drinking only affects the person who consumes alcohol.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

2.
What is the alcohol content of a standard drink in grams?

- ☐ 5
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 15
- ☐ 20

3.
You only have to worry about the risks of alcohol if you drink heavily.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

4.
Drinking on an empty stomach is not a safe way to drink.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

5.
What should a person do before going out drinking?

- ☐ Eat a meal
- ☐ Set a drink limit
- ☐ Plan a safe way home
- ☐ All of the above

6.
When a person needs to drink more alcohol than they used to in order to feel the same effect, this is known as tolerance.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Answers: 1. Answer: False / 2. Answer: 10 / 3. Answer: False / 4. Answer: True / 5. Answer: All of the above / 6. Answer: True



TAKE A MOMENT

Understanding Alcohol Harm

Asian Family Services

0800 862 342
www.asianfamilyservices.nz