

Alcohol

Having a drink with friends has been seen as an integral part of the Australian culture for decades.

However, if drink is getting in the way of your relationships, work, interests and impacting on your life that's not okay.

Alcoholism, excess drinking, binge drinking or having a drinking problem is all the same thing. If it's costing you more than money, then it's time to do something about it.

Be honest and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Has anyone – a friend, family member, doctor or colleague been concerned about your use of alcohol?
2. Has anyone – a friend, family member, doctor or colleague been concerned about your behaviour?
3. Have you been hurt or have you hurt anyone else physically as a result of drinking alcohol?
4. How many times have you forgotten the events of the previous night because of your drinking?
5. How many times do you feel any guilt, remorse, shame or embarrassment because of your alcohol abuse?
6. How many times do you need to take medicine, drugs or drink alcohol in the morning when you wake up to feel energised for the day?
7. How many times have you disappointed family members, colleagues, friends and bosses, because you were not able to do what was expected of you?
8. How many times have you realised that you cannot live a day without having a drink?
9. How many times a day or how many times a week, do you have a drink?
10. Do you have to have a stash of alcohol at the ready?

You might be dependent on alcohol if you have three or more of the following problems in a year:

- You cannot quit drinking or control how much you drink.
- You need to drink more to get the same effect.
- You have withdrawal symptoms when you stop drinking. These include feeling sick to your stomach, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety.
- You spend a lot of time drinking and recovering from drinking, or you have given up other activities so you can drink.
- You have tried to quit drinking or to cut back the amount you drink but haven't been able to.
- You continue to drink even though it harms your relationships and causes physical problems.