

Alcohol: For Your Consideration

This factsheet supports the drug and alcohol curriculum within the medical programme.

It aims to stimulate thoughts around both your own and fellow student's alcohol consumption, your host responsibilities and potential implications of harmful alcohol use.

Alcohol is one of the most commonly used drugs in New Zealand and excessive drinking is often observed as part of University initiation and ongoing student life.

For many alcohol consumption may not become a problem, however some students find that it impacts on their study, professional behavior, health and wellbeing.

Research indicates that University students drink more alcohol than other young people of the same age: Tustin, R. 2010. *Students and Alcohol Use in Aotearoa-New Zealand. An update of the Research Literature. 2004-2010.* Alcohol Healthwatch.



Monitoring your Alcohol Consumption:

You may not be aware of how much you are drinking and your level of risk. This interactive tool from the Health Promotion Agency is a useful tool that can gauge your alcohol consumption:

<http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/is-your-drinking-ok/is-your-drinking-okay-test/the-test>

Concerned about Your Drinking?

If you are worried about your drinking or have regrets about your behaviour when drunk you may want to make some changes to the way you drink. The following link will assist you in reviewing the effects of your drinking:

<http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/ease-up-on-the-drink/how-to-ease-up>

The Responsible Host:

In recognition of the public health impacts of harmful alcohol use the New Zealand Medical Association seeks to promote responsible drinking behaviour by medical students. The association identifies actions that can reduce harms from excessive alcohol consumption:

<http://www.nzmsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Promoting-Safe-Drinking-Behaviour-NZMSA-Position-Statement.pdf>

It is important that you consider your responsibilities when hosting a party if alcohol is being consumed. You have both a responsibility to your fellow students and yourself as host. The following fact sheets, *Tips for Hosts* and *How to be Safer* may prove helpful.

<http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/ease-up-on-the-drink/tips-for-hosts>

<http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/ease-up-on-the-drink/how-to-be-safer>



Doctors as Role Models:

Norms, values and attitudes all influence behavior and we learn to drink and continue to drink by those we observe, the attitudes about drinking we pick up, and the people we drink with.

Consider your drinking behavior and attitudes towards drinking and the messages you convey to fellow students, other health professionals and patients.

With the increased use of social media consider how you represent yourself, the University of Auckland Medical Programme and the medical profession.

Do you have any concerns about photographs and videos that could be shared with other?

US research identifies that medical students' healthy personal practices is a predictor for creating physicians who counsel patients about prevention:

Predictors of US medical students' prevention counseling practices; Frank E, Carrera JS, Elon L, Hertzberg VS. *Prev Med.* 2007 Jan; 44(1): 76-81. Epub 2006 Sep 14. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16978687>.

Your Future Eligibility for Registration

Be aware that your conduct and health prior to graduation can affect your future eligibility for registration as a medical practitioner.

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/get-registered/scopes-of-practice/fitness-for-registration/medical-students-fitness-for-registration/>

The Faculty Dean is required to advise the Medical Council of any doctors who may not be fit to practice due to physical or mental ill-health.

The Medical Council protects the public by ensuring doctors are fit to practise within the categories of Conduct - the professional behaviour of the doctor, Competence - the doctor's application of knowledge and skill; Health - the doctor's own physical and mental wellbeing.

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/fitness-to-practise/>

It may be timely to reflect on your alcohol consumption and alcohol related attitudes and behavior.



If you have any concerns about your health and wellbeing or wish to discuss support services available to you please contact a staff member at the Faculty or the University Student Health and Counselling Service:

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/student-health-counselling.html>

Further Information:

New Zealand Drug Foundation: <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/>

Alcohol Healthwatch: <http://www.ahw.org.nz/>

Alcohol.org.nz: <http://www.alcohol.org.nz/>

Ministry of Health: Alcohol Use 2012/13: New Zealand Health Survey:
<http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/alcohol-use-2012-13-new-zealand-health-survey>

Images: (https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=free+stock+images&rls=com.microsoft:en-NZ:IE-Address&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjW8rmO_d7TAhWFi5QKHUKABWUQ_AUICigB&biw=1920&bih=934#tbm=isch&q=alcohol+free+stock+images&imgsrc=2kRbs161954p3M:&spf=752)