



injury matters

PREVENTION TO RECOVERY

ALCOHOL AND MEDICATION INTERACTIONS





Alcohol can impact judgement, perception, mental alertness, balance and coordination.

Alcohol also interacts with a range of medications. The effects of alcohol and medication can be higher when mixed, increasing the risk of injury, including falls, violence and road crashes.

Mixing alcohol with certain medications can reduce the effectiveness of treatment, increase negative side effects, or even lead to a toxic interaction. Familiarise yourself with the range of common medications in this guide and their interactions with alcohol.

It is best to encourage your patients to ask their GP or pharmacist about potential effects of mixing medication with alcohol to reduce their risk of injury. Remember, even over the counter medications can have effects when mixed with alcohol.

While there is no safe level of drinking, if people choose to drink alcohol there are actions they can take to reduce the likelihood of alcohol-related harm.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation have developed tips for minimising the associated harms, these include:

- Eating food before and while drinking; this will help slow drinking pace and the absorption of alcohol.
- Drinking non-alcoholic beverages, such as water, in between alcoholic drinks.
- Ordering small serves of alcohol and avoiding high-alcohol content drinks.
- Keeping track of how many drinks had, and avoid 'topping up' glasses.

New medications can interact with alcohol in unexpected ways.

Encourage patients to speak with their pharmacist or GP when starting a new medication.



Medication for	Generic name	Brand name/s	Potential reaction(s) with alcohol	Recommendation for patient
Sedating antihistamine	Dexchlorpheniramine	Polaramine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sedation • Drowsiness • Decreased motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid alcohol if taking these medications.
	Diphenhydramine	Snuzaid Unisom Sleepgels		
	Doxylamine	Dozile Restamine Restavit SleepWell		
	Promethazine	Allersoothe Fenezal Phenergan		
Hypertension	Ramipril	Tritace Prilace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthostatic hypotension (feeling dizzy when standing up from sitting) • Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor blood pressure and the effect of alcohol on these medications. • Avoid drinking more than 10 standard drinks a week and more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.
	Perindopril	Coversyl Prexum		
	Amlodipine	Amlo Nordip Norvasc		
	Indapamide	Dapa-Tabs Insig NatriliX		
	Prazosin	Minipress		
Anticoagulant	Warfarin	Coumadin Marevan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the risk of major bleeding with moderate and heavy drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid drinking alcohol daily. Alcohol should be limited to 1 to 2 drinks per day for men and 1 drink per day for women.¹
	Apixaban	Eliquis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the risk of bleeding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid heavy or binge drinking while taking these medications. Binge drinking is defined as > 5 drinks for men or > 4 drinks for women in about 2 hours.² • Limit alcohol intake to a maximum of 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women.^{3,4}
	Rivaroxaban	Xarelto		
	Dabigatran	Pradaxa		
Acute coronary syndrome	Low dose aspirin	Astrix Spren Cartia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. The risk depends on the duration of treatment, other drugs taken, history of GI bleeding and the amount of alcohol consumed.⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no consistent evidence that mild to moderate alcohol use significantly increases the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding in patients taking low dose aspirin. As the risk of GI bleeding depends on multiple factors, please discuss individual risks with your GPs or pharmacists.

Medication for	Generic name	Brand name/s	Potential reaction(s) with alcohol	Recommendation for patient
Ischaemic heart disease	Glyceryl trinitrate patch	Transiderm-Nitro Minitran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orthostatic hypotension Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol can increase the adverse effect of these medications. Take extra precautions such as standing up slowly from sitting to avoid falling.
	Isosorbide mononitrate	Duride Imdur Isobide MR Monodur		
Heart failure	Furosemide	Frusemix Uremide Urex Forte Lasix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orthostatic hypotension Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ascertain the influence of alcohol on this medication. Take extra precautions such as standing up slowly from sitting to avoid fall.
Anxiety, agitation, panic disorders	Diazepam	Antenex Valium Valpam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsiness Sedation Decreased motor skills Increase risk of accident-related injury⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol if taking these medications.
	Oxazepam	Serepax Alepan		
	Alprazolam	Kalma Alprax		
	Nitrazepam	Alodorm Mogadon		
	Temazepam	Normison Temaze Temptabs		
Pain	Codeine	Codeine Phosphate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase risk of drowsiness Sedation Decreased motor skills Slowed or difficulty breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol if taking these medications.
	Oxycodone	Endone OxyContin OxyNorm		
	Tapentadol	Palexia		
Muscle relaxant	Baclofen	Clofen Lioresal Stelax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsiness Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol if taking this medication.
Anti-infective	Isoniazid	Isoniazid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of liver toxicity Palpitations, dizziness, flushing, itching, headache or sweating when combined with alcoholic drinks containing tyramine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol during treatment.
	Metronidazole	Metrogyl Metronide Flagyl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea, vomiting, stomach cramp, flushing, headache and palpitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol during treatment and for 24 hours after finishing the course of treatment.

Medication for	Generic name	Brand name/s	Potential reaction(s) with alcohol	Recommendation for patient
Anti-infective	Griseofulvin	Grisovin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea, vomiting, stomach cramp, flushing, headache and palpitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol during treatment
Depression	Amitriptyline	Endep Entrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsiness Sedation Increase risk of hypertensive crisis (sudden spike in blood pressure) for phenelzine and tranylcypromine when combined with alcoholic beverages containing tyramine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol if taking an antidepressant until you know how your antidepressant will affect you. If complete abstinence is not possible, limit alcohol intake to 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men. If taking phenelzine and tranylcypromine, avoid alcoholic drinks containing tyramine.
	Nortriptyline	Allegron NortriTABS		
	Mirtazapine	Mirtanza		
	Phenelzine	Nardil Phenelzine Sulfate Tablets Phenelzine Sulfate USP 15 mg Tablets		
	Tranylcypromine	Parnate		
	Citalopram	Celapram Talam Cipramil		
	Dapoxetine	Priligy		
	Escitalopram	Esipram Lexapro Cilopam-S Lexam Loxalate		
	Fluoxetine	Lovan Zactin Fluotex Prozac		
	Fluvoxamine	Faverin Luvox Movox		
	Paroxetine	Paxtine Aropax Extine		
	Sertraline	Sertra Setrona Eleva Zoloft		

Medication for	Generic name	Brand name/s	Potential reaction(s) with alcohol	Recommendation for patient
Parkinson's disease	Levodopa with carbidopa	Sinadopa Kinson Sinemet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dizziness Drowsiness Postural hypotension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid alcohol while taking this medication.
Diabetes mellitus	Insulin	NovoRapid Humalog Humulin Levemir NovoMix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases risk of hypoglycaemia - alcohol decreases blood glucose concentration by inhibiting glucose output by the liver Can also mask warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia (sweating, trembling, dizziness, palpitations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit alcohol intake to < 10 standard drinks per week and < 4 standard drinks per day.⁸ Do not drink alcohol on an empty stomach. Always have something to eat before drinking or while drinking alcohol.
	Metformin	Formet Glucobete Diabex Diaformin		
	Sulfonylurea	Glyade MR Diamicron MR Minidiab Amaryl Daonil		
Musculoskeletal and joint pain	NSAIDs	Nurofen Advil Naprosyn Voltaren Celebrex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the risk of gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding. The risk of GI bleeding depends on individual risk factor, dose of NSAIDs, frequency of NSAIDs use (occasional or regular) and the amount of alcohol consumed.⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best to avoid alcohol, especially in individuals with predisposing risk factors for GI bleeding and who are on regular NSAIDs. Risk of GI bleeding is unlikely in Individuals who consume very little alcohol and only use NSAIDs occasionally.¹⁰
	Methotrexate	Methoblastin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the risk of liver toxicity although the evidence is inconclusive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of liver toxicity is dependent on individual patient risk factors.¹¹ Limit to 1 to 2 standard drinks once or twice a week and avoid drinking > 4 standard drinks on one occasion.¹²



These are examples of some common medications that may interact with alcohol; this list may be incomplete.

Encourage patients to speak with their pharmacist or GP if unsure what medications may interact with alcohol

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