



HeartKids

Alcohol and energy drinks

Information to help young people with childhood heart disease make informed choices about alcohol and energy drinks.



What are the risks of drinking alcohol?

Drinking alcohol carries risks for all young people. Alcohol can affect your body and behaviour. Drinking large amounts of alcohol can affect your mental health. In the longer term, it can also damage important organs like your brain and liver.

Young people are more likely to be negatively impacted by alcohol because their brains are still developing.

Can I drink alcohol if I have childhood heart disease?

Alcohol affects everyone differently. How it affects you depends on your weight, medical conditions, medications, what you have been eating and how quickly you drink. Some people with a heart condition may need to avoid alcohol.



Drinking alcohol might carry extra risk for you. Talk to your doctor before trying risky behaviours like drinking alcohol or energy drinks.

Why is it important to talk to my doctor first?

Doctors get asked all sorts of questions. They will be able to provide the facts about drinking and provide you with the best information about what that means for your condition.

Your doctor can help you determine what the risks are for you. They can provide advice on how to reduce these risks and reduce the harm to your health and wellbeing. Your team is there to support you and answer your questions.

If you have all the information, you will be able to make the best choices for your health.

Tips for drinking responsibly

Based on the advice provided by your doctor, you might consider drinking.

There are a few tips that can help you to drink responsibly:

- **Drink slowly.** Take your time and enjoy other activities so you are not focused only on alcohol and drinking.
- **Know your medications.** Make sure you know how alcohol will react with any medications you are on.
- **Know your alcohol.** Make sure you know how strong the alcohol you are drinking is. Beer, wine and spirits all have different strengths. This is important to understand so you can calculate how much is a sensible amount for you.
- **Drink water.** Keep hydrated by drinking water. This can be difficult if you are on a fluid restriction. Talk to your doctor about how to manage this if this is you.
- **Keep an eye on your drink.** Make sure you know what and how much you are drinking.



In Australia you must be 18 to legally purchase and drink alcohol.

Can I drink energy drinks?

Energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant. It can make you feel more awake, but it also causes your heart to beat faster.

Energy drinks may change your heart rhythm, which can be dangerous if you have a heart condition. If you have problems with abnormal heart rhythms or a more complex heart condition, it may be safest to avoid energy drinks.

Before trying energy drinks, talk to your doctor about the risks they pose for you.

This fact sheet was reviewed and updated by HeartKids in March 2021. It was endorsed by our Clinical Advisory Committee at the time of publication. Clinical information might change after this date. The information in this fact sheet is general. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about matters that affect your health.

Photo by [Eliott Reyna](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Where to find more information and support

headspace and ReachOut

 headspace.org.au

 au.reachout.com

Learn more about alcohol and how it affects young people.

HeartKids

 heartkids.org.au

Learn more about CHD and the support HeartKids can offer you.

 1800 432 785

Call the HeartKids Helpline for support, advice and guidance.

 @HeartKidsAustralia

 @HeartKids