

The impact of alcohol consumption

Cancer

Alcohol drinking accounted for **180,000 new cancer cases** in 2020 (source: IARC/WHO database)

Alcohol consumption is a **known risk factor for many cancers** including digestive cancers, such as oesophageal, liver, pancreatic, colorectal & gastric cancer (source: UEG)

All types of alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine & spirits, are linked to cancer risk, regardless of their quality and price. (source: European Code Against Cancer)

Digestive & liver diseases

Alcohol accounts for **nearly 30% of deaths from gastrointestinal diseases** in Europe

Alcohol-related liver disease is the **most prevalent cause of advanced liver disease** in Europe (source: EASL)

Alcohol is the most common cause of acute and chronic pancreatitis in Eastern, Northern and Western Europe. The biological mechanisms accounting for how alcohol intake may cause pancreatitis are still unclear and require further research. Chronic pancreatitis harbors an increased risk of pancreatic cancer. (source: UEG)

Cardiovascular disease

Alcohol consumption is linked with high blood pressure and hypertension. (source: Lancet)

Even small amounts of alcohol can increase the risk of CVD. (source: WHF)

Alcohol consumption is associated with **risk of atrial fibrillation, heart failure, and hemorrhagic stroke**. (source: ESC)

Drinking more than 70 g of alcohol per week is associated with **worsening pre-heart failure** or progression to symptomatic heart failure. (source: ESC)

Chronic kidney disease

Alcohol **causes changes in the function of the kidneys** and makes them less able to filter the blood.

Alcohol use is associated with an **increased incidence of newly diagnosed CKD**.

Binge drinking and alcoholism are an undeniable factor in the development of CKD.

Neurological diseases

Chronic alcohol consumption can produce numerous neurological manifestations – the most common being **polyneuropathy, cerebellar degeneration and dementia**.

Regular alcohol consumption can **affect necessary vitamins for proper nervous system functioning** (such as thiamine, folate, and vitamin B6 and B-12) and can thus amplify nervous system problems.

Respiratory diseases

Alcohol consumption is associated with an increased **risk of lung inflammation, tuberculosis and pneumonia** (source: ERS).

Excessive alcohol intake **impacts breathing** (source: ERS)

Heavy use of alcohol increases the **risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome** (source: WHO)

Diabetes

Excess alcohol intake is associated with an **increased risk of type 2 diabetes**

Alcohol reduces the body's ability to recover when blood sugar levels are dropping, hence increases the risk of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar levels) in diabetes patients

Alcohol can **make some of the complications of diabetes worse**

Immunological disorders

Alcohol **affects the immune function** and pulmonary clearing mechanisms, impairing the body's ability to fight infection.

Alcohol also **impacts gastrointestinal cells** with a worsening effect on the immune system.

