

Trends in Risky Alcohol Consumption Queensland 2012 - 2020

The impact of the change in guidelines

In 2020, the National Health & Medical Research Council revised the guidelines for safe levels of alcohol consumption for healthy adults.*

2009 guidelines

1. Lifetime risk: Consume no more than 2 standard drinks per day.
2. Single occasion risk: Consume no more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion.

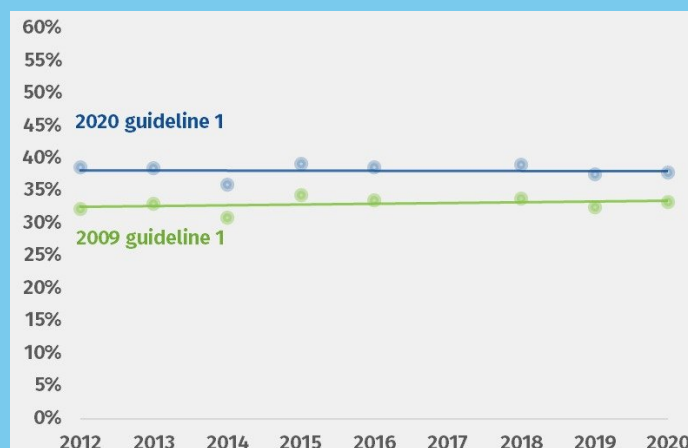
2020 guidelines

1. Healthy adults should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week. This should be no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.

Queensland Health regularly collects adult alcohol consumption data in the Queensland preventive health survey.**

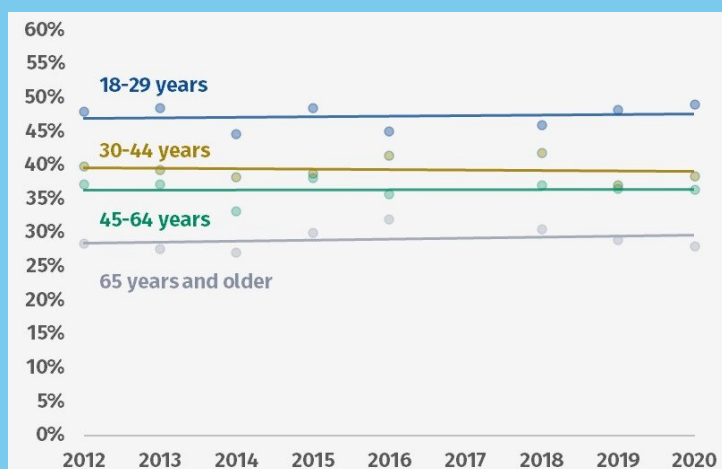
- The change in the guidelines means that more adults are now considered risky drinkers (Figure 1).
- The proportion of adults considered risky drinkers has been stable from 2012 to 2020, regardless of which guideline is used.

Figure 1. Percentage of Queensland adults considered risky drinkers by NHMRC guideline, 2012 - 2020



To compare with 2020 guideline 1, 2009 guideline 1 is defined as greater than 2 standard drinks per day or more than 4 on a single occasion.

Figure 2. Percentage of Queensland adults considered risky drinkers by age group, NHMRC 2020 guideline 1, 2012 - 2020



Using the 2020 guidelines, risky alcohol consumption is (Figure 2):

- highest in young adults aged 18 - 29 years
- lowest in persons aged 65 years and older
- stable in all age groups from 2012 to 2020.

Additional 2020 guidelines

There is no safe level of alcohol consumption in young people aged less than 18 years.

Women should not consume alcohol when pregnant or breastfeeding.

*National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol [Internet]. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; 2020. Available from: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

**Queensland Health. Queensland preventive health survey. Queensland survey analytic system (QSAS) detailed results. [Internet]. 2020 [cited 19 Nov 2020]. Available from: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/population-health/preventive-health-surveys/detailed-data>

Additional 2020 alcohol guideline fact sheets are available from: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/population-health/reports>