

# a standard drink

## supporting health and life



### What is a standard drink?

A Canadian “standard drink” is a fixed quantity or unit of alcohol. This measure allows drinkers to recognize the amount of actual alcohol present in beverages of different kinds, concentration and size. Knowing how many standard drinks one has had can help a person decide when it’s best to stop. Low-risk guidelines suggest appropriate limits in number of standard drinks per week and on any occasion.

### What counts as a standard drink in different beverage categories?

A Canadian standard drink equals the amount of alcohol present in a typical retail container of regular strength beer, our country’s most popular alcohol drink. It also applies to the same volume of alcohol present in other main beverage types – wine and spirits.

Consumers can learn to estimate accurately enough standard drink amounts in various beverage products and servings. Larger volumes or higher concentrations will increase the number of standard drinks present; smaller volumes or lower concentrations will decrease that number.

### Learning to count drinks?

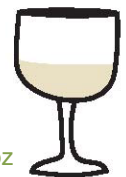
- 18 oz glass of regular beer (5% alcohol) = 1.5 standard drinks
- bottle of light beer (3.7% alcohol) = 0.7 standard drink
- can of extra strength beer (8%) = 1.7 standard drinks
- a 750 ml bottle of wine (12% alcohol) = 5 standard drinks
- 9 oz glass of wine (14% alcohol) = 2 standard drinks
- 2 oz shot of spirits (40% alcohol) = 1.3 standard drinks

**A Canadian standard drink is**  
17.05 ml or 13.45 g of pure alcohol

Each of the following are 1 standard drink



5% Alc  
350 ml/12 oz



12% Alc  
150 ml/5 oz



40% Alc  
40 ml/1.5 oz

*For interactive online practice in pouring a standard drink, take the challenge at [www.deflatetheelephant.com](http://www.deflatetheelephant.com)*

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