# Long-term health effects of drinking alcohol\*

## Whole of body

- existing health conditions made worse, such as mental illness and diabetes
- death from injury or disease

## Mouth, throat and voicebox

cancer

## Lungs

 inflammation, usually from infections

#### **Breasts**

· cancer (in women)

#### Liver -

- · swelling and pain
- alcoholic liver disease, such as cirrhosis
- cancer

# Blood and immune system

- changes in red and white blood cells
- anaemia
- less ability to fight off infections

#### Skin and fat

- yellowing of skin and spider veins
- potential weight gain

#### **Bones and muscles**

- weakness
- muscle wasting



- depression and anxiety
- alcohol dependence

**Mental health** 

# Brain and nervous system

- brain damage
- memory loss
- disrupted sleep
- stroke (bleeding on the brain)
- nerve damage

## Heart and circulation

- cardiovascular disease
- high blood pressure

# Stomach and food pipe

- inflamed lining and bleeding
- cancer of the food pipe

#### **Pancreas**

- inflammation and damage
- pancreatitis

### **Intestines**

- inflamed lining
- cancer

## **Sex organs**

- impotence and loss of sex drive
- wasting of testicles
- reduced fertility (both sexes)

For more information, go to **alcohol.org.nz** 



<sup>\*</sup> Risk of developing these health effects varies depending on the amount and frequency of alcohol consumed and individual factors.