

# Alcohol



TRAUMA SERVICE  
WESTMEAD HOSPITAL



## Drink Driving

Drink driving is a factor in about one in five crashes where someone is killed. Of those killed 88% are men and 75% are aged under 40.

Drink driving isn't driving drunk – just one drink—even if you don't feel it—is enough to reduce your ability to drive. Young drivers with any amount of alcohol in them are at a much higher risk of crashing. This is why the government set the zero alcohol limit for drivers on the L's and P's.

Getting back to zero (sobering up), takes a long time. No amount of coffee, food, exercise or sleep will speed up the process. Many drivers do the smart thing and leave the car at home if they're going out for a big night. Some drivers get caught for drink driving even though on that day they haven't had a drink - because there's enough alcohol (from the night before) left in their bloodstream to fail a breathalyser test.

In NSW, police have the power to:

- + Stop drivers at random to test for alcohol.
- + Arrest drivers who test over the legal limit.
- + Arrest drivers they believe are impaired by drugs, and conduct a blood and urine test
- + Require a driver to undergo a sobriety test in certain circumstances.

You may not have seen them but last year police conducted 3.4 million breath tests in NSW.

## Drink Walking

It's great that so many people leave the car behind and don't drink and drive. It may surprise you to know that drink walking is problem. While most people have got the message that drink driving is a crime and a real risk to safety they don't realise there's a problem with people being affected by alcohol and while walking being struck by a car.

Remember other drugs also impair your driving and mixing one drug with another, or mixing alcohol with other drugs, dramatically increases your risk of crashing.

## Reducing the risks

- + Alcohol impairs your abilities—so it can be hard to judge the speed or distance of an oncoming car. You may think you have enough time to cross the road, but you don't.
- + Alcohol increases confidence so some people take more risks—not a good idea around traffic
- + Be careful of walking on roads in darkness.
- + Cross roads at traffic lights and if there are no lights cross in an area where there is
- + Never sit or rest on the road, however quiet it might appear.
- + Make sure you look after your friends after you leave the venue.
- + Be conscious of how much alcohol you and your friends are drinking – alternate with low or non-alcoholic drinks and have something to eat.