# Alcohol use and harm during COVID-19

## Summary

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia and associated lockdowns, people are experiencing fear, uncertainty, economic pressures and social isolation. For many people, these factors may contribute to an increased likelihood of alcohol being used at riskier levels and in riskier ways which can increase alcohol harm within the home, such as family violence, alcohol use disorder and suicide. For others, the changes in routine may provide an opportunity to reassess and reduce their alcohol use and lead them to seek out support to make healthy changes.

This Report provides a snapshot of the recent available data on alcohol use and harm during the pandemic in Australia, focusing on the period between March – May 2020. The report references service provider data, national and international surveys, alcohol purchasing data and news media.

## Key findings

* COVID-19 is causing significant mental distress in Australia, which increases the likelihood of risky alcohol use in the community. There are early indications of increased demand for online Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) supports. There are also early indications of increased incidence of family violence across Australia, and increased involvement of alcohol in family violence situations.
* A number of potentially problematic alcohol use behaviours during COVID-19 were recorded in an April FARE commissioned YouGov survey, including nearly one in seven (13%) Australian drinkers being concerned about the amount of alcohol they or someone in their household is drinking, 11% reporting drinking to cope with anxiety and stress and 14% reporting they have been drinking daily.
* Consumer spending data on alcohol and sales results from alcohol retailers indicate there has been significant increases in packaged liquor sales since the beginning of COVID-19 lockdowns in Australia, particularly for online sales and home delivery.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Alcohol-use-and-harm-during-COVID-19.pdf)