

HEALTH REPORT

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CHEMICAL COCKTAILS COMMONPLACE FOR AUSTRALIANS

National research figures released today show that mixing medicines with alcohol and other drugs is commonplace for many Australians.

A key finding of this month's Pfizer Australia Health Report is that nearly half of all Australians are not at all concerned about the potential dangers of mixing different medicines with alcohol and other drugs.

The research was conducted by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) and researched-based medicines company, Pfizer Australia.

An interesting finding from the survey shows that 84 percent of those who drink every day have taken western medicines in the last 24 hours.

A further 55 percent of those who drink every day have taken complementary medicines in the last 24 hours.

Additionally, 39 percent of those who drink every day have taken both complementary and western medicines in this time.

Alarming, just over a quarter of Australians do not advise their doctor or pharmacist of other medicines they are taking if not prescribed by them.

The NDARC says this complacent attitude could increase the risk of serious consequences.

"All medicines must be treated with caution – whether complementary, prescription or over-the-counter.

"This is particularly relevant to women and older Australians who are the heaviest users of medicines," said Paul Dillon, Information Manager from the NDARC.

According to Mr Dillon, unwanted, and sometimes serious, side-effects can occur when alcohol reacts with another drug or medicine that the person has taken.

"People need to take care when using any sort of medicine. One alcoholic drink when taking medicine may be one too many as adverse reactions can happen at a relatively low blood alcohol level," he said.



When taking medicines, the NDARC strongly advises all Australians to:

- seek advice from a healthcare professional
- carefully read the information label

To assist with educating the public about mixing alcohol with medicines, the NDARC has collaborated with Pfizer Australia to produce this month's edition of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. Filled with useful information, free copies can be requested by phoning **1800 675 229** or by visiting www.healthreport.com.au where people can also sign-up for email alerts of future editions.

The findings on Australian perceptions of mixing alcohol with medicines are based on responses from 1,075 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in December 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

Pfizer Australia is the nation's leading research-based health care company, investing over \$A42m in local research and development annually. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative medical treatments for both humans and animals. For more information, visit www.pfizer.com.au.

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NB: INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SPOKESPEOPLE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY

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