



ALCOHOL AND HEALTH

Drinking alcohol is usually associated with unwinding, celebrating and being social. However drinking too much alcohol can be harmful to your health so try to drink responsibly and in moderation.

RECOMMENDED LIMITS

The Government has set sensible drinking guidelines for healthy men and women to help us to keep a measure on how much we drink.

- Men- should not regularly exceed 3-4 units a day (and no more than 21 units a week).
- Women- should not regularly exceed 2-3 units a day (and no more than 14 units a week).
- Women trying to become/who are pregnant are advised to avoid alcohol.

The guidelines are set daily rather than weekly to help prevent 'saving up' units and drinking heavily in a short space of time (binge drinking) which may lead to health problems. There is particular concern about this behaviour pattern in young people.

WHAT IS A UNIT?

A standard unit measures the amount of alcohol, not the amount of liquid you drink. One unit is 8g of alcohol- which is typically half a pint of beer, 25ml of spirit or a small 125ml glass of wine.

The alcohol content of your drink is also influenced by the strength and the size of the measurement. All alcoholic drinks will contain a measurement of its alcohol by volume (ABV). ABV is a measurement of how much of the drink is made up of pure alcohol - this means a small 125ml glass of wine (10% ABV) could contain 1 unit whereas a large 250ml glass of wine (15% ABV) could contain nearly 4 units! It can be easy to not realise how much you are drinking, especially if you are home pouring, so keep an eye on how many units you are drinking.

HEALTH EFFECTS

The short term effects of drinking too much alcohol are well known. Your speech, behaviour, body movement and perception can all be affected. In some cases it may also cause nausea, vomiting and may also disrupt sleeping patterns.

Regularly drinking more than the recommended limits puts you at risk of seriously damaging your health - increasing your risk of a number of conditions including liver disease, stroke, hypertension and some cancers.

The long term effects of drinking too much alcohol also includes weight gain. Alcohol contains nearly as much energy as fat per gram, so if you do not maintain energy balance you may easily gain weight.

HOW MANY CALORIES IN YOUR DRINK?

Drink	Calories	Units
Lager 4% ABV (1 pint)	170	2
White Wine 11% ABV (175ml)	130	2
Spirits 37.5% ABV (25ml)	55	1
Bitter 4% ABV (1 pint)	190	3
Red Wine 11% ABV (175ml)	120	2
Cider 5% ABV (1 pint)	200	3

TOP TIPS

Why not try the following to help you keep within your limits?

1. Try to pace yourself when drinking by alternating your alcoholic drinks with water or a soft drink- this can also help you to keep hydrated and may also help to reduce a hangover the next morning!
2. Make sure you drink on a full stomach - drinking alcohol with food will help to slow down the rate your body absorbs alcohol and the rate at which it will start to affect your body. It will not reduce the amount of units you have consumed though!
3. Drinking in rounds can make you drink more than you intend - try to opt out to help you drink at your own pace.