

Alcohol



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Alcohol is a legal depressant drug that reduces the function or activity of a specific part of the body or brain.

Introduction

Effects

Alcohol is a depressant drug affecting the central nervous system; in small doses it can reduce anxiety and lessen inhibitions making those drinking feel more sociable. It can also exaggerate the mood they are in when they start drinking. It slows down reaction times and reflexes and affects balance and motor control.

The short-term effects of alcohol can last for a day or two, depending on how much is consumed, including the hangover.

Long-term effects include damage to body that can take years to develop and this leads to a wide range of serious health problems; these can include liver and kidney problems as well as cancers that are due to alcohol.

If consumed within safer drinking limits there is no reason why it cannot be enjoyed safely. For some people any amount of alcohol can be dangerous, for example pregnant women, those with existing health conditions or those taking other prescribed medication.

If alcohol consumption has caused serious problems with relationships, finances, health or the criminal justice system or if someone has undergone an alcohol detoxification it is strongly advised not to drink alcohol at all.

Drinking above recommended safe limits can leave people in an extremely vulnerable position. People often forget that alcohol is a drug, and easily the most widely used drug in the country.

(Information gathered from NHS Website)

Men and Women

Recommendations for alcohol units for Men and Women.



The recommended safer drinking limit for a healthy man is **3-4 units of alcohol per day** with at least 2 alcohol free days per week



The recommended safer drinking limit for a healthy women is **2-3 units of alcohol per day** with at least two alcohol free days per week.

What does a unit of Alcohol look like?

1.5
units



Small glass red/white/rosé wine
(125ml, ABV 12%)

2.1
units



Standard glass red/white/rosé wine
(175ml, ABV 12%)

3
units



Large glass red/white/rosé wine
(250ml, ABV 12%)

2
units



Pint of lower-strength lager/beer/cider
(ABV 3.6%)

3
units



Pint of higher-strength lager/beer/cider
(ABV 5.2%)

1.7
units



Bottle of lager/beer/cider
(330ml, ABV 5%)

2
units



Can of lager/beer/cider
(440ml, ABV 4.5%)

1.5
units



Alcopop
(275ml, ABV 5.5%)

1
unit



Single small shot of spirits*
(25ml, ABV 40%)

Binge Drinking

Binge drinking can be defined as a man consuming 8 or more units in a single session or a woman consuming 6 or more units. According to the NHS binge drinking usually refers to drinking lots of alcohol in a short space of time, or drinking to get drunk. Binge drinking need not be an everyday activity; it can be a drinking pattern that varies, perhaps at weekends or maybe once a month or perhaps heavy drinking for two or three days then no alcohol for a few weeks.

Both men and women who recently had a binge or heavy drinking session should allow at least 48 hours for your body to recover.

What does a binge look like?

Here are some examples of what would class as a binge – each row represents enough to be a binge but some people drink the equivalent of two or three rows or even all of this in a single session.

Binge drinking does not necessarily mean someone is dependent on alcohol but it can have serious health risks for anyone who is regularly drinking above the recommended safer limits. It can take a long time, perhaps even years for these health effects to show and by then the damage can be serious



Alcohol is also full of calories – **1 large glass of wine has the same calorie amount as a slice of sponge cake.**

Drinking in Pregnancy.

Drinking alcohol at any stage during pregnancy can be very harmful to a baby. Alcohol enters the bloodstream and some will pass through the placenta to the baby; this can affect how the baby grows and develops. Although adults can process a unit of alcohol in about an hour it is estimated that alcohol will stay in the baby's system for up to three times longer. An unborn baby's body and organs are still developing and so are at risk of alcohol related damage at all stages of pregnancy. Drinking more than the recommended amount while pregnant has been linked to a range of harms.

Drink aware fact sheet alcohol and pregnancy: <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/fertility-and-pregnancy/alcohol-and-pregnancy>

Drink Driving.

Some people are confused by drink drive limits and believe that there is a safe amount they can drink and still drive. There is no “safe amount” and anyone below the drink drive levels can be prosecuted for being “unfit through drink”. No one should assume that having “just one drink” will leave them ok to drive; the best and safest advice is to keep drinking behavior completely separate from driving.

(Information gathered from NHS and Drinkaware website)

The impact on you if someone is drinking.

At times someone who is using alcohol or drugs could become aggressive, abusive, intimidating or violent. This behaviour can happen when someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or if they are withdrawing from alcohol or drugs or even when they are sober. The alcohol or drugs are not an excuse for any intimidation, abuse or controlling behaviour.

- **The alcohol or drugs do not cause the abuse.**
- **You are not responsible for the person’s drinking or drug use.**
- **You are not responsible for any intimidation, abuse or controlling behaviour by your family member or friend.**
- **Do not feel that you have to cope alone, it is ok and advisable to seek help for yourself.**

Someone who is drinking or using drugs makes a choice to do this. If they know that they only become abusive when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs then they are choosing to behave that way when they choose to drink or use drugs.

Sometimes you can become frustrated or angry with the drinker / drug user. This is a natural emotional response BUT it does not mean you can justify intimidation or violence towards the person. If you are getting so angry that you don’t feel in control then you need to seek help.

Having a family member, partner or friend who has a drinking or drug problem can lead to many different forms of stress, and can lead to strain upon family or friends which can show up in your physical and emotional health resulting in things like high blood pressure, anemia, stomach upsets, back pain, headaches, difficulty sleeping, difficulty eating, depression, anxiety, drinking more, smoking more or even using drugs yourself

(Information taken from Aquarius)

Drink spiking and date rape drugs

(Information taken from NHS website)

Every year in the UK, hundreds of people are thought to be victims of drink spiking, where drugs or alcohol are added to someone's drink without them knowing. In some cases, so called date rape drugs may be used to spike a drink before a sexual assault.

How can I tell if my drink has been spiked?

Most date rape drugs take effect within 15-30 minutes and symptoms usually last for several hours. However, if you pass out it will be hard to know the full effect. You may still feel some of the symptoms of a date rape drug after a night's sleep.

Although your symptoms will depend on which drug has been used, they usually include some of the following:

- lowered inhibitions
- difficulty concentrating or speaking
- loss of balance and finding it hard to move
- visual problems, particularly blurred vision
- memory loss (amnesia) or "blackouts"
- feeling confused or disorientated, particularly after waking up (if you've been asleep)
- paranoia (a feeling of fear or distrust of others)
- [hallucinations](#) (seeing, hearing or touching things that aren't there) or having an "out of body" experience
- nausea and vomiting
- unconsciousness

How to avoid drink spiking

If your drink has been spiked it's unlikely that you will see, smell or taste any difference. Some drugs, such as GHB, may taste slightly salty or smell unusual. If you start to feel strange or drunk than you should be, get help immediately.

NHS Website: <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/abuse/pages/drink-spiking.aspx>

Young People

Young people may have friends who are experimenting with alcohol and they may have done so themselves. They may also be concerned that they are now drinking too much.

Young people drink for all sorts of reasons, perhaps their friends are and they don't want to be the odd one out. It is important to remember to keep safe if they do choose to experiment with alcohol, making sure they know all the facts.

Some effects of alcohol can include feeling sick/ill whilst drinking when they have had too much, feeling hung over the next day and feeling low the next day. This is all part of the body's reaction to a powerful, depressant drug. Alcohol is a depressant drug which slows the body down so responses are slower. This can result in falls and accidents as they will not react as quickly as they usually do. Alcohol also reduces inhibitions, meaning they may put themselves in vulnerable situations, a young person who is drunk is greater risk of being a victim of crime- being mugged or targeted for abuse or do something that they will regret the next day.

Young people may also drink because they feel stressed, worried or bored. As alcohol is a depressant drug this can make them feel lower in the long run. Try and get the young person to talk about any worries they have rather than using alcohol to cope.

Alcohol and the Law for children and young people.



GOV.UK guidelines

You can be stopped, fined or arrested by police if you're under 18 and drinking alcohol in public.

If you're under 18, it is against the law:

- for someone to sell you alcohol
- to buy or try to buy alcohol
- for an adult to buy or try to buy alcohol for you
- to drink alcohol in licensed premises (e.g. a pub or restaurant)

If you're 16 or 17 and accompanied by an adult, you can drink (but not buy) beer, wine or cider with a meal.

If you're 16 or under, you may be able to go to a pub (or premises primarily used to sell alcohol) if you're accompanied by an adult. However, this isn't always the case. It can also depend on the specific conditions for that premises.

It is illegal to give alcohol to a child under the age of 5, even at home.

It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy alcohol from an off-licence.

If the police suspect someone under 18 has alcohol in a public place, they have the power to confiscate it. If young people get caught with alcohol three times they could face a social contract, a fine or arrest. Getting a criminal record could affect future job prospects and make it more difficult to travel to countries like the USA. The police can also confiscate alcohol from someone, no matter what their age, if they believe it has been, or will be drunk by someone under 18 in a public place.

There's lots of debate about whether it's OK to let children have a small amount of alcohol to try - some people call this the continental approach. But there's no scientific evidence to prove this gives children a responsible attitude to drinking in later life.

It may be tempting to offer a child a sip of alcohol on special occasions so they don't feel left out. This could send mixed messages about whether they are or aren't allowed to drink.

Of course, children are naturally curious, so they'll probably ask questions if they see adults drinking and want to try some. Rather than offering them a sip, use this as a chance to talk to them openly and honestly about the facts.

Some parents might think that allowing a child to try alcohol will demystify any uncertainties they may have. Instead, as with issues like smoking and drugs, it's better to let them know they can ask anything, at any time, about alcohol.

The serious health effects of alcohol on children can be seen when their blood alcohol levels get too high. This can cause their brain to stop controlling the body's vital functions and in the worst case scenario they could stop breathing, fall into a coma or choke on their own vomit.

Sometimes young people might need advice and help from professionals to prevent them getting into trouble with alcohol.

Should my child drink alcohol?

NHS guidelines:

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/2595.aspx?categoryid=62>

Recourse Booklet (Guidance on the consumption of alcohol for young people and children)

<http://www.cph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Guidance-on-the-consumption-of-alcohol-by-children-and-young-people.pdf>

Drinkaware Fact sheet: Talk to your child about alcohol before their friends do.

<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/alcohol-and-your-child/why-talk#>

Drinkaware Fact Sheet: Yours child's health

Tackling the issue of alcohol with children kids and laying down some ground rules about drinking can be one of parenting's biggest challenges

<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/your-child-or-teenagers-health/your-child-or-teenagers-health>

Children and Young People Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Sadly, children are often the victims of sexual exploitation. Some children are forced to take drugs or drink alcohol, to have sex or to perform sexual acts without consent. Some are also forced to prostitute themselves for the sake of a third person. Children are often lured by older people who befriend them, with presents, drugs and alcohol and force or coerce them into having sex with people many times older than them. In some cases, the young boy or girl may believe that they are being mature when they spend time with older people but more often than not they are simply being taken advantage of. Some older people will take a young person into their homes as a boyfriend or girlfriend and then make them have sex with other people, exposing them to sexually transmitted diseases and violence.

NHS Website: How to spot child sexual exploitation

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/abuse/Pages/child-sexual-exploitation-signs.aspx>

Local Support Services

Shropshire Recovery Partnership

Shropshire drug and alcohol support will be delivered by ARCH and Addaction as the Shropshire Recovery Partnership (SRP). They provide advice and support for young people aged 18 and under who are affected by drugs, alcohol or solvents.

With recovery orientated treatment at the heart of all activities they provide a county wide, community based recovery service that is integrated and inclusive.

They offer a range of services which include the following:

- Open access advice and information
- Harm reduction, needle exchange and BBV prevention
- Outreach and re-engagement
- Criminal justice services
- Young persons service
- Hospital in-reach
- Structured daycare
- Psychosocial interventions
- Pharmacological interventions
- Shared care
- Stimulant services
- Family & carers support
- Access to detoxification service

The SRP has a confidentiality policy which has been agreed with Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board. Young people's information will not be passed on without their consent - unless someone is being abused or in danger of suffering significant harm. The SRP are happy to take referrals from young people, friends, family, carers or professionals.

The SRP is based in Shrewsbury but offer appointments throughout Shropshire

You can contact us on 01743 294 700 during the hours of:

Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.00pm

Friday from 8.45am - 4.00pm

Al-Anon and Alateen (Alateen is for 12-17years)

Confidential Helpline 020 7403 0888 Email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

Al-Anon provides support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking, regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not, this is a National and local service.

Alateen is for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics (Alateen is part of Al-Anon) They believe alcoholism is a family disease that affects everyone in the family. Alateen meetings are attended by 12-17 year olds. They meet to share their experiences of having, or having had, a problem drinker in their lives. They help and support each other.

Website: <http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/>

For Alateen meetings, phone the General Service Office on 020 7593 2070 other.

Is Alateen for you?

The following twenty questions are to help young people decide whether Alateen is for them.

- Do you have a parent, close friend or relative whose drinking upsets you?
- Do you cover up your real feelings by pretending you don't care?
- Does it seem like every holiday is spoiled because of drinking?
- Do you tell lies to cover up for someone else's drinking or what's happening in your home?
- Do you stay out of the house as much as possible because you hate it there?
- Are you afraid to upset someone for fear it will set off a drinking bout?
- Do you feel nobody really loves you or cares what happens to you?
- Are you afraid or embarrassed to bring your friends home?
- Do you think the drinker's behaviour is caused by you, other members of your family, friends or rotten breaks in life?
- Do you make threats such as, 'If you don't stop drinking, fighting, etc., I'll run away'?
- Do you make promises about behaviour such as, 'I'll get better school marks, go to church, or keep my room clean', in exchange for a promise that the drinking and fighting stop
- Do you feel that if you're Mum or Dad loved you, she or he would stop drinking?
- Do you ever threaten or actually hurt yourself to scare your parents into saying, 'I'm sorry', or 'I love you'.
- Do you believe no one could possibly understand how you feel?
- Do you have money problems because of some else's drinking?
- Have you considered calling the police because of someone's drinking behaviour?
- Have you refused dates out of fear or anxiety?
- Do you think that if the drinker stopped drinking, your other problems would be solved?
- Because you are angry at someone else for drinking too much?

If you have answered YES to some of these questions, Alateen may help.

Local Meetings

<u>Shrewsbury Thursday</u>	<p>St Winefrides Convent College Hill Shrewsbury Shropshire SY1 1LS United Kingdom</p>	Thursday	19:30
<i>Venue is Next to 1 College Hill</i>			
<u>Shrewsbury Monday</u>	<p>St Winefrides Convent College Hill Shrewsbury Shropshire SY1 1LS United Kingdom</p>	Monday	12:00

Aquarius

Aquarius strive to help people overcome the harms caused by alcohol, drugs and gambling. They work closely with families and friends to lessen the impact caused by a habit of a loved one.

Telephone: 0121 622 8181 for free advice and support

Email: shropshire@aquarius.org.uk

Address: Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1LY

Website: <http://aquarius.org.uk/alcohol/>

Smart Recovery

Smart Recovery Shropshire are an addiction support group who meet in Shrewsbury every Monday and Friday evening from 7pm to 8.30pm.

The group offers an opportunity for people in recovery from addictions to meet and support each other through discussion. With the help of smart recovery tools the group can assist in helping their lives become more manageable.

Telephone: 07950 296508

St Winifrieds Convent, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 1LE

Website: <https://www.smartrecovery.org.uk/>

IMPACT (Impact Alcohol & Addictions Services) **Based in Telford.**

IMPACT counsellors and psychotherapists provide a high quality, sensitive, supportive and confidential service to anyone concerned about their own or someone else's problem addictive behaviour.

Telephone: 01952 223165

Email: info@impactaas.co.uk

Website: <http://www.impactaas.co.uk/>

Shropshire Youth Association

Shiftys Bar - Alcohol Awareness

The aims of Shifty's are to:

- Provide young people with basic information on alcohol
- Raise awareness of the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption
- Reinforce the positive image of sensible drinking.

They provide information-led fun, interactive workshops on alcohol and drugs.

They help young people explore images, boundaries, preconceptions, prejudices and challenge urban myths surrounding the good and bad things about alcohol and drugs.

http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/fid/service.page?id=i2Tw_L-yt4&familychannel=0

National Support Services

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Telephone: 0800 9177 650 Email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Website: <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Meetings are held for Men and Women in the Shropshire area.

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting>

Drinkline

The helpline is open: Weekdays, 9am - 8pm, Weekends, 11am - 4pm
Drinkline runs a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their drinking, or someone else's, Drinkline offers the following services:

- Information and self-help materials
- Help to callers worried about their own drinking
- Support to the family and friends of people who are drinking
- Advice to callers on where to go for help

Telephone: 0800 917 8282

Website: <http://patient.info/support/Drinkline>

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

Do you ever feel ashamed, embarrassed or confused about your parent's drinking? Perhaps you feel different from other people you know? Or you want to know how you can help your parent?

If you would like to talk to someone, there is a free confidential helpline

Information and ongoing support

- For all ages
- Phone or email
- Your call won't show up on a landline bill
- You can tell us as little or as much as you want
- There is no need to give us your name

Free telephone helpline 0800 358 3456

Email: helpline@Nacoa.org.uk

Website: <http://www.nacoa.org.uk/>

Drink aware

Telephone: 020 7766 9900

Email: digital@drinkaware.co.uk

Drinkline (0300 123 1110) is a confidential helpline for anyone worried about their drinking.

Drinkaware aims to change the UK's drinking habits for the better. They promote responsible drinking and find innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture to help reduce alcohol misuse and minimize alcohol-related harm

Website: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/about-us>

Talk to FRANK

Frank is a government funded organisation which offers confidential drugs and alcohol advice to those with problems or those who suspect/ know that someone else has a problem. Complete anonymity (no need to give your name).

Telephone: 0300 123 6600 SMS: 82111

Website: <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

Turning Point

Turning Point is the UK's leading social care organisation. They provide services for people with complex needs, including those affected by drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and those with a learning disability.

They are one of the largest providers of substance misuse services in England and their range of drug and alcohol services help people recover from addiction and gain control of their lives. They provide:

- Residential rehabilitation services
- Residential detox
- Supported People services
- Integrated services
- Psychological interventions service
- Drug intervention programme services
- Care coordination services
- Open access services
- The Resolution Clinic

Telephone: 020 7481 7600 (Please note that this is not a helpline)

Manchester office: 0161 238 5100

Email: info@turning-point.co.uk

Website: <http://www.turning-point.co.uk/>

Adfam

Adfam is the national charity working to improve life for families affected by drugs and alcohol.

They want anyone affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use to have the chance to benefit from healthy relationships, be part of a loving and supportive family and enjoy mental and physical wellbeing.

Drug and alcohol use can threaten and ultimately destroy family relationships and wellbeing. Adfam empower family members and carers, support frontline workers and influence decision-makers to stop this happening.

By telephone 020 7553 7640 (please note we do not operate a helpline)

Email: admin@adfam.org.uk

Website: http://www.adfam.org.uk/about_us

Resource fact sheets

Drink Aware: Talking to your children about alcohol

https://resources.drinkaware.co.uk/downloads/factsheets?product_id=451

Drink Aware: Risks associated with underage drinking

<https://resources.drinkaware.co.uk/downloads/factsheets/risks-associated-with-underage-drinking>

Drink Aware: Facts about alcohol

https://resources.drinkaware.co.uk/downloads/factsheets?product_id=445

NHS Website:

http://www.nhs.uk/search/?query=Alcoholic%20drinks&collection=nhs-meta&start_rank=1