

FACT SHEET

Alcohol

Know your limits

KNOW YOUR LIMIT

The level of alcohol in a drink is expressed by the number of units the drink contains, e.g. 1 unit of alcohol is a standard single measure of vodka or whiskey; a pint of standard lager contains 2.3 units*.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' advise that men and women drink no more than 14 units a week on a regular basis. This is to lower the risks of developing alcohol related illnesses.



WHAT DOES 14 UNITS LOOK LIKE?

It can be hard to picture exactly what 14 units look like, so here are some examples:

- 5 pints of 4.5% cider
- 6 pints of 4% lager or ale
- 6 medium (175ml) glasses of 13% strength wine
- 12 alcopops at 4% (275 ml)
- 14 single measures (25ml) of spirits

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH ALCOHOL YOU'RE DRINKING?

drinkaware.co.uk have a great tool for keeping track, and you can also set up an account to help manage your drinking, which can be downloaded as an app to your smart phone.

GETTING HELP

For more about the effects of alcohol, it's impact on health, and suggestions for reducing drinking, visit **drinkaware.co.uk**.

If someone you know is struggling with alcohol use, please seek specialist help.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF USE

Alcohol has both short term and long term health effects on the body and mind, and on lifestyle. It is a depressant, and so slows down the bodies' central nervous system. It can make you feel more relaxed and sociable, but too much can make you feel ill, resulting in negative effects, such as a hangover.

In the short term alcohol can cause slurred speech, loss of balance, higher risk of having accidents and even cause loss of consciousness.

Longer term effects of alcohol include high blood pressure, cancer, heart disease, liver disease, and digestive problems.

Alcohol can also have a negative impact on your mental health, contributing to stress, depression, anxiety and memory problems.

ALCOHOL AND CALORIES

Alcohol contains a lot of calories. This is because it is made from sugar or starch. Calories from alcohol have no nutritional value. Although they contain trace amounts of vitamins and minerals, they are not in amounts that make a significant contribution to our diet.

ALCOHOL AND THE LAW

It is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to under 18's anywhere
- For an adult to buy, or attempt to buy alcohol for someone under 18
- For under 18's to buy or attempt to buy alcohol

If you are 16 or 17 and accompanied by an adult, you can drink beer, wine or cider with a meal, but you cannot buy this yourself.

Police can confiscate alcohol from someone, regardless of their age, if they believe it will be, or has been, drunk by someone under 18.

ALCOHOL AND DRIVING

Alcohol effects our ability to drive, and the only safe advice is not to drive if you are drinking alcohol.

In England and Wales, it is illegal to drive with over 35 microgrammes per 100 millilitres of breath, and in Scotland with over 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath.

What about the next day?

On average it takes the body 1 hour to process 1 unit of alcohol. Depending upon what and when you last drank, alcohol could still be in your body the next day, making you over the legal limit to drive.