



**Blackpool Teaching  
Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Drink Less See More of Life**

## **Alcohol Liaison Service**

**Patient Information Leaflet**



Caring • Safe • Respectful

# It's time to think about what you drink...

Alcohol has become a normal and accepted part of everyday life and most people enjoy an alcoholic drink from time to time. Relaxing with a glass of wine or a pint of beer, either at home or out with friends can be a good way to unwind.

However, for some people, the pleasant effects of alcohol can lead them to drinking more than is recommended, which over time may cause a number of health problems.

**YOUR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION SHOULD NOT REGULARLY EXCEED**



## **MAXIMUM WEEKLY ALCOHOL GUIDANCE**

Limits are now the same for men and women at 14 units a week. That equals...



**Six** pints of beer (4% strength)



**Seven** glasses of wine (11.5 strength, 175ml)



**Fourteen** single shots (40% strength, 175ml)

This should be spaced out over 3-4 days  
**ALSO INCLUDE 3 ALCOHOL FREE DAYS PER WEEK**

**Do you ever say or hear any of these?**

***“It’s only in the evenings that I have a drink”***

It’s not unusual to want to have an alcoholic drink in the evenings. This can help you to relax and unwind, possibly after a long day at work. However, the ‘one glass of wine’ that you have initially can quite easily lead to more, and then you may think ‘I might as well finish the bottle’. Many people do get into the habit of regularly drinking above the recommended levels of alcohol intake.

***“I haven’t got a drink problem, I don’t drink first thing in the morning”***

Regularly drinking too much alcohol can lead people to depend on alcohol, in the same way as people become addicted to drugs. These problems can arise regardless of the time of day that you are drinking alcohol. Although drinking regularly doesn’t necessarily mean you are an alcoholic, reducing your intake would benefit your health.

***“I just have 2 glasses of wine a night, whilst my partner simply has 4 pints of beer”***

Even though this may not seem like a lot of alcohol, the pictures overleaf show how many units are in certain drinks. As well as being aware of the units, you also need to look at the strength of the alcohol and the size of your glass (e.g. a glass of wine can contain between 1 and 3 units). The amount that you are drinking during the evening may still be taking you above the recommended daily intake, which in turn will be having an impact on your health.

## ***“I only drink alcohol at the weekends”***

Often drinkers pack their alcohol consumption into a few sessions, usually on a Friday or Saturday night. However, this pattern of drinking could risk your personal safety and that of others, impact on your relationships with family, friends and employers and also harm your health. The body breaks down alcohol at a rate of one unit in every hour. Therefore if a person drinks a large volume of alcohol in a short space of time, the rate that the body breaks down the alcohol remains the same, which has a negative effect on your health.

### **Did you know...**

...a bottle of wine has 40% of the daily recommended calories for women. This is comparable to 3 Mars Bars, a Big Mac burger with medium fries or 6 jam doughnuts.

## **How does this affect me?**

As you drink more alcohol, it can result in a range of health problems including low energy, memory loss, relationship problems, depression, insomnia and impotence. Drinking on a regular basis can also lead to alcohol dependence, high blood pressure, liver disease and a range of cancers including breast, throat and colon cancer.

### **Did you know...**

...alcohol is high in calories and by drinking 3-4 Gin & Tonics a day over four weeks you could put on as much as 4lbs.

## Know your units

Alcohol is measured in units, although the amount of units in each alcoholic drink does depend on the strength of the alcohol and the size of the glass/bottle. The pictures below are for guidance only.



Wine (175ml):  
ABV 12%

**2 UNITS**



Wine (250ml):  
ABV 12%

**3 UNITS**



Wine (75cl):  
ABV 12%

**9 UNITS**



Beer / Lager / Cider (330ml):  
ABV 4%

**1.3 UNITS**



Beer / Lager / Cider (440ml):  
ABV 5%

**2.2 UNITS**



Beer / Lager / Cider (568ml):  
ABV 9%

**5 UNITS**



Spirit / Shots (25ml):  
ABV 38-40%

**1 UNITS**



Spirit / Shots (35ml):  
ABV 38-40%

**1.4 UNITS**



Spirit / Shots (1ltr):  
ABV 38-40%

**40 UNITS**

ABV %' shows the strength of each alcoholic drink. The higher the %, the stronger the alcoholic content of the drink.

# The benefits of cutting down

## Psychological/Social/Financial

- Improved mood
- Improved motivation
- Improved relationships
- Improved safety for yourself and others
- Save money / more money to spend on other things

## Physical

- Sleep better
- More energy
- Lose weight
- Reduction in hangovers
- Reduced risk of injury
- Improved memory
- Better physical shape
- Reduced risk of high blood pressure
- Reduced risk of cancer
- Reduced risk of liver disease
- Reduced risk of brain damage

## Getting help

If you think that your drinking has become a problem and need some help, advice and support contact:

**Alcohol Liaison Service 01253 953943.**

## Cutting back: what you can do

Most people are able to make some changes to their alcohol intake to bring it in line with the recommended levels, so that their health is not affected.

- **Count your units:** A drinks diary can raise your own awareness of when, where and who you usually drink with.
- **Make a swap:** Instead of always choosing your usual tippie, try an alcohol free drink such as a smoothie, fruit juice, water, or you could even try a low alcohol drink.
- **Alternate your drinks:** Drink water between each alcoholic drink so that you stay hydrated, drink less alcohol and also feel better the next day.
- **Find ways to relax and try to distract yourself:** At times when you would usually drink alcohol, try to do something different. This could involve pursuing a hobby or interest, such as walking, swimming, cycling, reading a book, listening to music or gardening.
- **Reduce your glass size or size of the measure:** Choosing smaller wine glasses, drinking halves instead of pints or drinking single measures instead of doubles can all help to reduce how much alcohol you are drinking.
- **Reduce the strength of your drinks:** Try to avoid 'super-strength' beers, add mixers to spirits and change your usual drink for one that is of a lower strength (check out the ABV % on the side of the bottle to see what the strength is).

## Other sources of information:



[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)  
[www.drinking.nhs.uk](http://www.drinking.nhs.uk)



**Hospital switchboard**  
Telephone: **01253 300000**

## Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives.



You can contact them via tel:  
**01253 955589** or by email:  
**[bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net](mailto:bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net)**



Further information is available on our website:  
**[www.bfwh.nhs.uk](http://www.bfwh.nhs.uk)**

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this booklet then please call: **01253 955520**



**01253  
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