

## How Can Alcohol affect your safety?

- Alcohol is a mind-altering drug. It can affect our physical coordination, making us more liable to have accidents. It can also make us more likely to take risky decisions.
- Some people are more vulnerable than others to the immediate effects of alcohol due to factors such as body size, gender and genetics and when they last ate.
- The more drinks you have the greater the effect.
- Alcohol also helps to reduce sexual inhibitions—although this can seem like a good thing, in the wrong situation it can have disastrous results.
- When you are drinking your ability to gauge the safety of a situation and to take action to get out of a potentially dangerous or threatening situation is reduced.

## Further resources

### Drinkaware

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

### Alcohol concern

[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

### Department of Health

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Healthimprovement/alcoholmisuse/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Healthimprovement/alcoholmisuse/index.htm)

## Alcohol and Sensible Drinking



## What are the recommended safe limits of alcohol?

- **Men** should drink no more than 21 units of alcohol per week, no more than four units in any one day, and have at least two alcohol free days a week.
- **Women** Should drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, no more than three units in any one day, and have at least two alcohol free days a week.
- **Pregnant Women** Advice from the Department of Health states that pregnant women or women trying to conceive should not drink alcohol at all. If they do choose to drink, to minimize the risk to the baby, they should not drink more than 1-2 units of alcohol once or twice a week and should not get drunk..

## Alcohol the Facts

A unit of alcohol is 10ml of pure alcohol. Counting alcohol units can help you keep track of how much you are drinking. The list below shows the approximate number of units of alcohol in common drinks.

- ⇒ A half pint of beer (4%) = 1 unit
- ⇒ Single spirit shot (40%) = 1 unit
- ⇒ A small glass of wine (12.5%) = 1.5 units
- ⇒ A half pint of strong beer (6.5%) = 2 units
- ⇒ Bottle of wine (12.5%) = 9 units
- ⇒ Bottle of spirits (40%) = 30 units

## What are the problems with drinking too much alcohol?

### Health risks

About 1 in 3 men, and about 1 in 7 women, drink more than the safe levels. Many people who drink heavily are not addicted to alcohol, and are not alcoholics. To stop or reduce alcohol would not be a problem if there was the will to do so. However, for various reasons, many people have got into a habit of drinking regularly and heavily. But, drinking heavily is a serious health risk.

If you drink heavily you have an increased risk of developing the following:

- Hepatitis (inflammation of the liver)
- Cirrhosis (scarred liver). Up to 3 in 10 long term heavy drinkers develop cirrhosis.
- Some cancers (mouth, gullet, liver, colon and breast)
- Stomach disorders
- Pancreatitis (sever inflammation of the pancreas)
- Mental health problems
- Sexual difficulties such as impotence
- Muscle and heart muscle disease
- High blood pressure
- Damage to nervous tissue
- Accidents
- Obesity
- Alcohol dependence (addiction)