drinkaware
change starts with you

Alcohol and the facts

Understanding the facts about alcohol and how it affects your mind and body can be the first step to increasing your awareness and reducing your drinking.

Alcohol affects your body and mind in a number of ways and can impact your short and long-term health. Drinking more than 14 units a week increases your risk of a wide range of serious health conditions including:

Cancer

Drinking alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer, including breast, bowel, mouth, and liver cancer.[1] Not everyone who drinks alcohol will get cancer, but scientists have found that several cancers are caused by drinking alcohol - with the risk increasing the more you drink.

Mental Health

While the effects of alcohol can sometimes have a short-term positive impact on our mood, in the long-term it can cause problems for our mental health. Drinking alcohol is linked to a range of mental health issues from depression and memory loss to anxiety and suicidal feelings.

Heart Disease

Long-term heavy drinking can damage your heart, arteries or other blood vessels throughout your body. This damage is called cardiovascular disease (also known as CVD).[2]

Liver Disease

Alcohol-related liver disease is caused by drinking alcohol, usually over a sustained period of time. One in five adults in the UK drink alcohol in a way that could harm their liver.[3]

Type 2 Diabetes

Drinking above the UK low-risk guidelines can increase your risk of type 2 diabetes. When it's not well managed, it is associated with serious health complications including heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage and amputations.[4]

Pregnancy

Drinking alcohol at any stage during pregnancy can cause harm to your baby – the more you drink, the greater the risk. This is why the low-risk drinking guidelines advise pregnant women that the safest approach is to not drink alcohol at all during pregnancy.

The Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) guidance says to keep health risks from alcohol low, it is safest for both men and women to drink no more than 14 units a week, spread over three or more days with several drink-free days, and no bingeing.[5]

Because alcoholic drinks come in many shapes and sizes, units are a good way to help you know just how strong your drink is.

Understanding how many you're drinking is a great first step to looking after your health.

How many units are in your drinks?

Spirit and mixer (25ml/40%)

Glass of prosecco (125ml/12%)

Bottle of alcopop (275ml/4%)

Medium glass of wine (175ml/13%)

Pint of beer (568ml/4%)

Pint of cider (568ml/4.5%)

Watch this video for more information https://youtu.be/Hh-cgSjvN6Y

Tips to reduce your drinking

When you're ready to drink less, Drinkaware is ready for you. Small steps - like understanding your triggers - can make a big difference. And we have the facts, tips and advice to help.

Having **several drink-free days each week** is a great way to stay within the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk guidelines

Replacing your alcoholic drinks with **lower alcohol or non-alcoholic** alternatives will reduce the number of units you consume, assuming you drink the same number of drinks

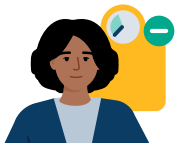
On a night out, pace yourself by **alternating alcoholic drinks** with water or soft drinks to keep those units down

For more information and practical advice visit drinkaware.co.uk/advice

Benefits of reducing your drinking

There's lots of great reasons to reduce your drinking:[6/7]

A sound night's sleep



Slimmer waistline

Brighter skin

More energy

Cutting back on alcohol can have positive effects on the way you look and feel – often within just a few days. And, you'll be reducing your long-term risks of serious illnesses, such as cancer, at the same time.

Alcohol can affect your body, lifestyle and mental health. But by cutting down on the amount you drink, eating well, not smoking and being active you can increase your chances of staying healthy.[8]

Watch this video for more information https://youtu.be/tH44S1PPJbg

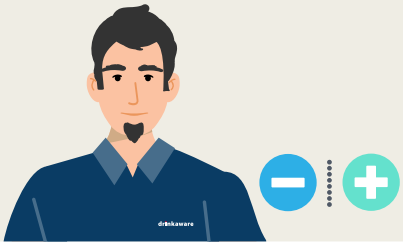
Tools to help you keep on track

Ready to change your drinking habits? We have a range of tools on our website to help you assess, track and set goals to reduce your drinking. Using one of our tools could be the first step to changing your relationship with alcohol and improving your health.

You can do it with the free **MyDrinkaware app**. Track your alcohol consumption and sleep, calculate units and calories and set goals to help you moderate your drinking.

Use our **Unit and Calorie Calculator** to work out the number of alcohol units and calories you consume.

Take our **alcohol self-assessment** to identify if the amount you drink could be putting your health at risk.



It's time to go from thinking about cutting back, to enjoying life while drinking less.

How about today?
Change starts with you.

Alcohol support services

If you are concerned that you or someone you care about has a drinking problem, there is help available.

Chat to one of our trained advisors for free confidential advice via our Drinkchat service or call the free confidential helpline Drinkline on **0300 123 1110.**

Find out the many ways that you can access support, advice or treatment on our website **www.drinkaware.co.uk/support**

To learn more about all our tools visit **drinkaware.co.uk/tools**

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References can be found here