

No amount of alcohol is completely safe

The NHS-recommended limits are the levels of regular drinking that pose only a low risk of developing future health problems. Drinking above these levels on a regular basis is associated with an increasing risk of disease.

Everyone could be two to five times more likely to develop cancers of the mouth and throat.

Men could be four times more likely to have high blood pressure.

Women could be three times more likely to suffer a stroke.

There is an increased risk of:

- heart disease and stroke
- liver damage, such as cirrhosis and liver cancer
- depression, memory loss, brain damage or dementia
- stomach damage
- potentially fatal alcohol poisoning

The NHS recommends:

Men should not exceed 3 to 4 units* per day on a regular basis**.

Women should not exceed 2 to 3 units per day on a regular basis.

* 1 unit is 10ml (8g) of pure alcohol - this is the amount of pure alcohol in a 25ml single measure of spirits, a third of a pint of beer, or half a 175ml 'standard' glass of red wine.

** "on a regular basis" means drinking every day or most days of the week.

How do the daily limits work?

Alcohol's hidden harms usually only emerge after a number of years - and by then, serious health problems can have developed. The effects of alcohol are different for each person.

The limits are given as ranges because the same amount of alcohol can affect different people in different ways, depending on your sex, weight, height and many other factors.

They're lower for women because women and men process and tolerate alcohol differently; for example, women's bodies have a higher ratio of fat to water, so they generally can't process alcohol as easily.

And they're given as daily figures for regular consumption because it is important to recognise that regular daily levels quickly add up.

The NHS wishes to discourage the belief that you could take the number of units of a weekly limit and drink them all at once — 'binge drinking' is harder on your body and may put yourself or others at risk.

Are there times when you shouldn't drink at all?

- You shouldn't drink at all before strenuous exercise and operating machinery.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Pregnant women or women trying to conceive shouldn't drink alcohol.
- You also shouldn't drink if you're on certain medicines — your doctor or pharmacist can give you advice if you're not sure.
- If on certain occasions you do drink heavily, give your body a chance to recover - at least 48 hours with no alcohol. Otherwise you're just adding to the damage.

For help, information and advice you can:

Speak to your GP

Telephone Drinkline on 0800 917 82 82 or 0800 876 67 76 - the national alcohol helpline.

If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline, in complete confidence, 24 hours a day.

For **Birmingham residents only** telephone 0800 073 0817 to access screening & assessment

Visit the following websites:

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/livewell/alcohol/

Alcohol Concern
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk.org.uk

Drinkaware
www.drinkaware.co.uk

Addison Dental Practice
31, Redhill Road
West Heath
Birmingham
B31 3JS
www.addisondental.co.uk



How Does Alcohol Affect Your Health

Information and Advice Leaflet

