



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Looking After Your Heart - Alcohol Intake

Cardiology Directorate

Alcohol

Alcohol related health problems are reducing every individual's life expectancy across the North West on average:

- By over ten and a half months for males.
- Over six months for females.

What are the recommendations?

The following are guidelines for alcohol consumption that will pose no significant risk to your health:

- **Men three to four units or less per day***
- **Women two to three units or less per day***

(* You should include days without drinking within each week)

If you have a heavy drinking session you should avoid alcohol for the next 48 hours to give your body tissue time to recover. It takes approximately one hour for your liver to remove one unit of alcohol.

If you drink heavily in the evening you may still be over the drink-drive limit the next morning. Only time can remove alcohol from your bloodstream; black coffee, cold showers and fresh air won't sober you up.

Health risks of drinking

- Your body changes when you get older, making you more prone to falls and broken bones if you drink too much.
- The effectiveness of medication may also be reduced.

- Heavy drinking can put a strain on your liver and other parts of your body.
- Drinking will also make you dehydrated, which is why you feel hung over after excessive drinking.
- Regular drinking increases your blood pressure.
- It also increases your risk of liver damage, liver cirrhosis, and mouth and throat cancers.
- You may also develop psychological and emotional problems, including depression and suicidal tendencies.
- Women who are pregnant or who are trying to conceive are advised not to drink more than one or two units once or twice a week and it is especially important to avoid getting drunk.
- People with diabetes or on medication for other conditions should consult their doctor about whether it is safe to drink alcohol. It may be very dangerous to mix some drugs with alcohol.

Tips for sensible drinking

It is better to always drink within safe limits;

Here are a few tips to help you stay safe:

- Eat before you drink.
- Drinking in rounds often means you drink more than you want. Try to skip a round or opt for a non-alcoholic/soft drink.
- Pace yourself by taking smaller, less frequent sips or using smaller glasses if at home.
- Be aware that mixing alcohol with drugs or medicines can be fatal.

- Plan the number of units that you want to drink, whether on a single occasion or in a week and try to stick to the target.
- Avoid 'top ups' so you can keep track of the quantity that you are drinking.
- Often the desire to drink is stimulated on certain occasions, like meal times or when you are hot after sport. Plan to do something else to occupy your mind at these times or try to substitute with a soft drink to get over the initial craving.
- Keep a drinking diary. This will help you accurately monitor your alcohol consumption.
- If you are trying to lose weight, you should remember that alcoholic drinks are high in calories

Further information

Liverpool Alcohol Services

Tel: 0151 529 4504

Alcoholics Anonymous

Tel: 0845 769 7555

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