Taking time out

Every so often it’s worth looking at how, when and why we drink alcohol.

If you do find you are uncomfortable with how you drink, for example, behaving in ways you wouldn’t normally; experiencing mood swings; having difficulty with the “comedown” afterwards or deliberately underestimating your drinking if asked about it, then you may want to talk to your GP. She/he will be able to offer information and advice, and refer you to support and services that best suit your needs. Talk to family and friends who you think could be of help.

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For general information on alcohol and support services go to
www.drinkhelp.ie

Reduce Your Drinking: Reduce Your Cancer Risk

www.alcoholireland.ie
You may be surprised to learn that alcohol increases your risk of developing certain cancers, including breast cancer.

The more alcohol you drink, the more you increase your risk of developing a number of cancers, such as cancer of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, liver, bowel and breast.

The good news is you can reduce your risk of developing certain cancers by reducing your alcohol consumption.

It is important to remember that it is the amount of alcohol you drink that increases your risk of developing certain cancers.

While there is no “no risk” level for drinking alcohol, by keeping within moderate limits, you are reducing your risk.

For women, drinking alcohol is associated with an increase in the risk of developing breast cancer.

The risk, relatively small at moderate levels of consumption, again increases with the amount of alcohol consumed.

**Smoking and drinking**

Smoking and drinking together increases the risk of cancer - the effects of alcohol and tobacco together are much worse than either by itself.

**Some benefits to cutting down**

As well as reducing your risk of cancer, cutting down alcohol can have other benefits:

- Looking better – easier to manage weight and healthier skin (alcohol dehydrates the skin, dilates small blood vessels and can make it look red and blotchy)
- Improved mental health
- Better sleep
- Increased energy
- More money
- Lower risk of stroke and heart disease

**How much is too much?**

The guidelines for low risk drinking are: up to 21 Units (equivalent to 17 Irish Standard Drinks) for a man and 14 Units (equivalent to 11 Irish Standard Drinks) for a woman spread over the course of a week with at least 2/3 days alcohol free.

The following measurements are based on alcohol commonly available in Ireland and measured in units:

- A quarter bottle of wine (175mls), 12% ABV (alcohol by volume) contains just over 2 units of alcohol - a 750mls bottle is around 9 units
- A 750ml bottle of wine, 14.5% ABV (alcohol by volume) contains close to 11 units
- A pint of beer is around 2 units but if the beer is stronger for example 5% ABV (alcohol by volume) then it is closer to 3 units
- A bottle of beer, 4.7% ABV (alcohol by volume) contains 1.6 units
- A half pint of cider, 4.5% ABV (alcohol by volume) contains 1.3 units, a 275ml bottle of cider at 5.3% ABV (alcohol by volume) contains 1.5 units
- A pub spirits measure of 35mls and based on a 40% ABV (alcohol by volume) is around 1.4 units
- An alcopop is around 1.4 units

**Tips to help you cut down**

It might sound simple but start by drinking less alcohol than what you are drinking now.

- Keep a drinks diary – note how much you drank, when and how you felt afterwards
- Find other ways to reward yourself than drinking alcohol: go to the gym, go for a walk, make time to do something you really enjoy
- Avoid drinking alcohol if you’re feeling ill, depressed, bored, anxious or lonely
- Keep within low-risk weekly limits
- Remove or reduce the amount of alcohol you keep at home