

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. S/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.

For general information on alcohol go to www.alcoholireland.ie



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Men & Alcohol: Making the Drink Link



Your health and alcohol

For many of us alcohol is something we enjoy – we use it to unwind, to celebrate, to commiserate and when socialising with friends. If you do choose to drink, there are a few key facts that are good to know:

- Alcohol is high in calories. For example, there are around 240 calories in a pint of lager, and about 340 in a cheeseburger - you do the maths
- Drinking affects your physical performance, even in small amounts - drinking larger amounts will affect your ability to think and act fast, making you a weak link in any team games
- Drinking can have a negative effect on your sexual performance, increasing the risk of impotence
- One in ten cancers in men is caused by alcohol
- One in four deaths of young men aged 15-34 is due to alcohol
- It's important to avoid alcohol if you're coping with depression and/or anxiety – alcohol is a depressant and can cause you to feel more depressed and/or anxious

Some benefits to cutting down

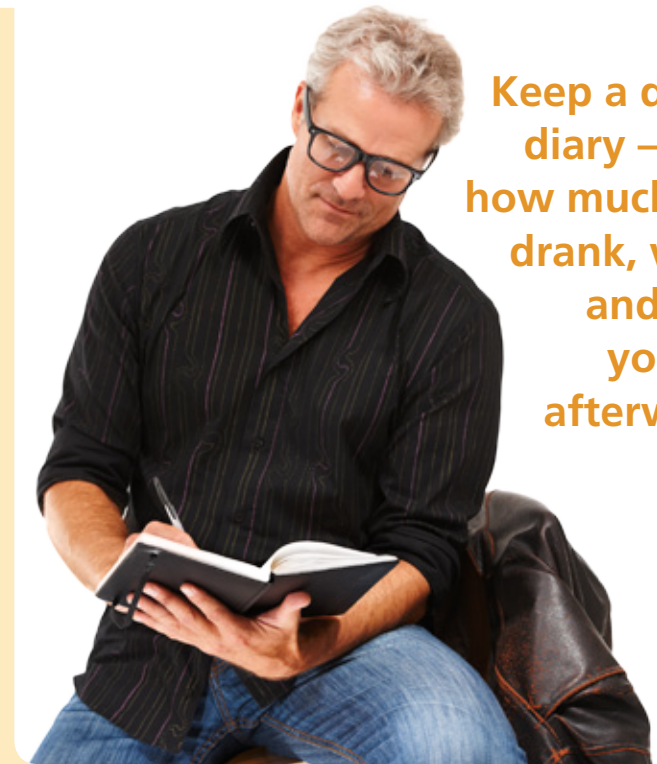
- You look better – easier to manage weight and healthier skin (alcohol dehydrates the skin, dilates small blood vessels and can make it look red and blotchy)
- Better performance on and off the pitch
- Improved mental health
- Better sleep
- Increased energy

- Save money
- Lower risk of cancers
- Lower risk of stroke and heart disease

How much is too much?

The guidelines for low risk drinking are up to 21 units (17 standard drinks) for a man 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:

- 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 750 ml 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



Keep a drinks diary – note how much you drank, when and how you felt afterwards

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