

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 and support services go to www.alcoholireland.ie

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



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



AlcoholAction
Ireland 
www.alcoholireland.ie

AlcoholAction
Ireland 
www.alcoholireland.ie

Women and Alcohol: Making The Drink Link



Your health and alcohol

For many of us, alcohol is something we enjoy – we use it to unwind, to mix with friends or as a reward at the end of a day. If you do choose to drink there are a few key facts we need to be aware of:

- Women feel the effects of alcohol faster and alcohol stays in our bodies longer compared to men
- Alcohol can have a greater effect on us depending on where we are in the menstrual cycle – particularly if you are due for/ have a period. It can also aggravate PMS
- Heavy drinking can result in unprotected and/ or unwanted sex
- Alcohol is high in calories and a bottle of wine is the equivalent of two bars of chocolate or a regular burger and chips



Make yourself aware of the facts

- Drinking during pregnancy can lead to babies developing physical and intellectual disabilities known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- Drinking 3 to 6 standard alcoholic drinks (half to a bottle of wine) a day is associated with 41% increase in risk of developing breast cancer

Some benefits to cutting down:

- Lower risk of breast cancer and other cancers as well as stroke and heart disease
- More energy
- Save money
- Improved mental health
- You look better too – easier to manage weight and healthier skin (alcohol dehydrates the skin, dilates small blood vessels and can make it look red and blotchy)

How much is too much?

The guidelines for low risk drinking are up to 14 units (11 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:

- 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



Find other ways to reward yourself than drinking alcohol

- 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 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