

Tips to help cut down

- > Take part in activities without alcohol that make you feel good and that you enjoy: dancing; walking; playing cards
- > Consider volunteering – your talents/ skills could be needed by organisations
- > Think about what triggers you have – could it be financial worries, health concerns, loneliness or boredom? Could you talk to others about your worries and concerns?
- > Stay away from people and places that you associate with drinking
- > Don't have drink in your home
- > Try having a hot drink as a nightcap instead of alcohol
- > Avoid drinking alcohol if you're feeling ill, depressed, anxious or lonely
- > Is it time to pick up an interest or hobby you used to enjoy? Maybe you'd like to start a new interest or activity?

Reviewing your drinking

Ask your pharmacist or doctor whether it's safe to mix your medicine with alcohol.

If you are worried about your alcohol use:

- Talk to your doctor. S/he will be able to offer you information and advice, and refer you to the support or service best suited to your needs
- Talk to family and friends who you think could be of help

Alcohol Action Ireland: Who we are

Alcohol Action Ireland is the national charity for alcohol-related issues. We work to create awareness of alcohol-related harm and advance solutions to reduce that harm.

To find out more about the effects of alcohol go to www.alcoholireland.ie, and click on the alcohol and you section.



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ALCOHOL & GETTING OLDER: AGEING WELL?



Your health and alcohol

Many of us enjoy a drink. There is even evidence to suggest that low levels of alcohol use - less than two drinks a day - can have a small health benefit.

As we age, however, our ability to break down alcohol is reduced and so we can develop problems with alcohol, even when our drinking habits remain the same.

Drinking too much, too often, can cause *new* health problems and can worsen existing health conditions increasing the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, a number of cancers as well as the risk of osteoporosis, a disease which weakens the bones. Drinking too much affects co-ordination and balance, and can put us at risk of injury.

Alcohol and medication

Many of us take medication as we get older. Mixing alcohol with some medicines can cause them not to work, and can even damage health.

Alcohol and your mood

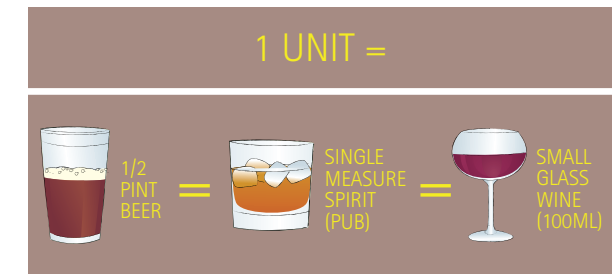
Sometimes we drink to relieve feelings of sadness, loneliness, stress or worry. Although drinking alcohol can initially make us feel better, it is a depressant and feelings of anxiety and depression can quickly come back, sometimes even stronger. It is worth being honest and asking ourselves the question - why am I drinking?



How much is too much?

The guidelines for low-risk drinking are up to 14 units a week for a woman and 21 units for a man, spread out over the week.

What does this mean?



It's important to keep two or three days alcohol free. If you are ill or on medication, these low-risk guidelines may be too high. Talk to your doctor about what's best for you.

There are many benefits to cutting down or cutting out alcohol - feeling healthier, having more energy, sleeping better and a reduced risk of injury and accident to ourselves. We have a choice about how and when we drink and whether alcohol has a place in our life or not.

It's never too late to make the changes that will make your life even better.