



ALCOHOL MISUSE

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

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ISN'T DRINKING JUST A PART OF NORMAL LIFE?

WE CAN ALL BENEFIT FROM DRINKING LESS...

...weight loss, more energy and less chance of doing things we might regret. Cutting down can sometimes seem tricky but there are lots of things you can do.

SO WHAT IS ALCOHOL MISUSE?

Alcohol abuse, or misuse, means drinking excessively, which would be drinking more than the lower risk limits of alcohol consumption on a regular basis.

Alcohol consumption is measured in units. A unit of alcohol is 10ml of pure alcohol, which is about: half a pint of normal strength lager, a single measure (25ml) of spirits or a small glass (125ml) of wine contains about 1.5 units of alcohol.



SO ASK YOURSELF...

Am I drinking too much alcohol?
You could be misusing alcohol if....

YOU FEEL YOU
SHOULD CUT DOWN
ON YOUR DRINKING

OTHER PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN CRITICISING
YOUR DRINKING

YOU FEEL GUILTY
OR BAD ABOUT
YOUR DRINKING

YOU NEED A DRINK FIRST THING
IN THE MORNING TO STEADY
YOUR NERVES OR GET
RID OF A HANGOVER

YOU'RE SOMETIMES
UNABLE TO REMEMBER
WHAT HAPPENED THE
NIGHT BEFORE BECAUSE
OF DRINKING

YOU REGULARLY EXCEED
THE LOWER-RISK DAILY
LIMIT FOR ALCOHOL

YOU DON'T DO WHAT'S EXPECTED
OF YOU AS A RESULT OF DRINKING
EG: MISSING AN APPOINTMENT OR
WORK BECAUSE OF BEING DRUNK
OR HUNGOVER

LOWER RISK LIMITS

TO KEEP YOUR RISK OF ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM LOW, THE NHS RECOMMENDS:

NOT REGULARLY
DRINKING MORE
THAN 14 UNITS OF
ALCOHOL A WEEK.

IF YOU DRINK AS MUCH AS
14 UNITS A WEEK, SPREAD
THESE EVENLY OVER
THREE OR MORE DAYS.

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO
REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF
ALCOHOL YOU DRINK, IT'S
A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE
SEVERAL ALCOHOL-FREE
DAYS EACH WEEK.

REGULAR OR FREQUENT
DRINKING MEANS DRINKING
ALCOHOL MOST WEEKS.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF? Practical guidance you can follow...

ALCOHOL FREE

Try to drink alcohol free beers and try and find one that you like.

GLASS AT A TIME

At home, pour a glass rather than having a bottle of wine on the table or only have a drink with a meal, you are the boss at home.

ALTERNATE

Make every second drink a nonalcoholic one.

WATER

Start and end your night with water - you'll thank yourself.

PACE & ABV

Try to add ice to white wine to help pace yourself and check alcohol content of wines - aim for 12% or 13% instead of 14% or 15% ABV.

CALORIE COUNT

Watch the calories - a standard glass of wine can contain as many calories as a piece of chocolate, and a pint of lager has about the same calorie count as a packet of crisps.

GIVE IT A MISS

If you are feeling pressured to drink too much then have a lower strength beer or soft drink when it is your round.

DEPENDENT DRINKING

As well as causing serious health problems, long-term alcohol misuse can lead to social problems, such as unemployment, divorce, domestic abuse and homelessness. If someone loses control over their drinking and has an excessive desire to drink, it's known as dependent drinking.

Dependent drinking usually affects a person's quality of life and relationships, but they may not always find it easy to see or accept this. Severely dependent drinkers are often able to tolerate very high levels of alcohol in amounts which would dangerously affect or even kill some people.

SIT OR PLAY

You drink more slowly when sitting than standing up so sit down when drinking or get up and play pool or darts or dance to drink less.

A dependent drinker usually experiences physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms if they suddenly cut down or stop drinking, including: hand tremors ('the shakes'), sweating, seeing things that aren't real (visual hallucinations), depression, anxiety and difficulty sleeping - insomnia. This often leads to relief drinking to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

STOP SUDDENLY

Get medical advice before you stop drinking if you have physical withdrawal symptoms. It can be dangerous to stop drinking too quickly without proper support.

DRINK EMPTY

Don't drink on an empty stomach - as the food competes with the alcohol and slows down how quickly it is digested.

KEEP UP

Don't feel pressured to keep up drinking speed with anyone else.

STOP BELIEVING

Don't think you can't change. People who drink alcohol are regularly changing what they drink depending on how much money or time they have to drink. Everyone changes their behaviour all the time.

SQUARE ONE

Don't think if you are trying to stop and have a slip up that you are back to square one. Look at what went wrong this time and learn how to change the way you manage it next time.

WHAT PROFESSIONAL HELP IS AVAILABLE IF I WANT IT?

There is no need to let your drinking ruin your life – help is available. Visit your GP who will be able to help you and refer you or you can refer yourself to local services for support.

REMEMBER..
YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE. TALK TO A
MATE - RING THE
HELPLINE - CHECK
OUT THESE LINKS

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence. Call **0300 123 1110** (weekdays 9am to 8pm, weekends 11am to 4pm).

Alcoholics Anonymous - At AA, people help each other. We will support you. You are not alone. Together, we find strength and hope. You are one step away. Call free **0800 917 7650**, email help@aamail.org or ask any questions in the live chat box. www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Al-Anon Family Groups - UK and Eire is there for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking. Find out more information about Al-Anon Family Groups and the support available. al-anonuk.org.uk

Addaction are now called With You - With You is a drug, alcohol and mental health charity. With over 80 services across England and Scotland, we provide support and advice to more than 100,000 people a year. www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Adfam - Adfam is the leading families and addiction charity in England.

We are here for all the millions of people affected by someone else's drinking or drug use. These people are children, parents, friends, partners, siblings and grandparents. adfam.org.uk/for-families

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) - is dedicated to eliminating the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families, providing resources and support for those affected by addiction. nacoa.org.uk

SMART Recovery groups help participants decide whether they have a problem, build up their motivation to change, and offer a set of proven tools and techniques to support recovery. smartrecovery.org.uk



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