



## Responsible drinking



One or more sections on this page provide access to easy-read information - look out for this logo.

Many people drink alcohol on social occasions, to unwind or to celebrate. It can be great to enjoy a pint of beer or a glass of wine, but most people know that drinking can have very significant health risks if indulged in too much. It's easy to slide into a routine of drinking a lot without really being aware of it.

Drinking to excess can cause a number of health problems including [heart problems](#), liver damage, increased risk of [stroke](#) and increased risk of [diabetes](#). It can also cause mood changes and addiction, which can affect people around you.

The good news is that no-one is saying that everyone should stop drinking - it's just important to be aware of your real consumption rate, and cut back if you are at risk of causing yourself harm.

No-one likes being told what to do, but there are plenty of sources of information and support to help you understand the amount you drink, potential health risks, and how to cut down.

### Drinking responsibly

Consider the following when planning and monitoring your alcohol intake:-

- **Make a note of how much you drink each day.** It can be surprising - if you find you're regularly drinking over the recommended limit (3 to 4 units a day for men, or 2 to 3 units for women) it might be a good idea to cut down.
- **Don't rely on alcohol as a stress-buster.** If you feel like cheering yourself up, exercising boosts a sense of well-being and sends feel-good hormones round the body - and it's better for you than having a drink. It can be as simple as a walk round the park. Or try yoga or breathing techniques, or perhaps meditation. Have a look at our [exercise](#) page, or go to our [Events calendar](#), for ideas about what to do and where to go.
- **Make sure you eat as well as enjoy a drink.** Drinking on an empty stomach significantly upsets the metabolism, and the alcohol will hit your system more quickly and may make you feel queasy. So if you're going to have a drink, make sure you have eaten something first. Eating healthy food including plenty of vegetables and fruit will also make sure your digestive system stays healthy. See our pages on [nutrition](#) and [weight loss](#) for ideas and help for healthy eating and nutrition.
- **Take a break and don't drink every night** - this gives your body time to recover and recuperate and cuts down the risk of damage to your liver. Try to leave 48 hours if you can.
- **Never drink and drive.** Don't drink if you may have to drive later - just a couple of drinks can be enough to put you over the legal limit, and alcohol stays in your system for a long time so even if you feel fine, you still may not be safe to drive.

### Other information and advice

The [Invisible Elephant](#) is a peer-led website for anyone living in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, or Hammersmith and Fulham, who is affected by problems with alcohol or substance misuse. It provides a wealth of information and advice, with details of local support groups and services.

[Drinkaware](#) is a national independent charity whose website has a wealth of useful information and tips on reducing alcohol consumption and drinking sensibly.

[NHS Choices](#) is also an excellent source of information, personal stories and ideas about drinking and alcohol.

The [NHS Change for Life website](#) provides information on how drinking less can help to improve your health, and tips on how to reduce the amount you drink.

[drinks-meter](#) is a website and mobile 'app' that offers anonymous, personalised feedback on your drinking. It's not just about what you drink, it's about how much you drink, who you are and what else is going on in your life. The website lets you compare your drinking to thousands of other people around the world as well as to

### Related pages

- Good nutrition and balanced diet
- Mental health
- Domestic abuse
- Alcohol and substance use
- Being a carer

Show all

Taking care of yourself

Health conditions

Dementia and memory loss

Mental health

Learning disability

Easy Read Information For People With Learning Disabilities

Alcohol and substance use

Support with alcohol or drug problems

Information about alcohol and drugs

Responsible drinking

Worried about someone else's drug or alcohol use?

Needle exchanges

Jobs and education advice for people with a drug or alcohol problem

Mental health and drug or alcohol problems

Keeping in touch and staying well over Christmas

One You in Hammersmith & Fulham

One You

national guidelines, and includes information about how drinking may be affecting your health. You can keep track of your drinking week by week, over time.

[Alcohol Concern](#) is a small independent charity which is committed to reducing harm from alcohol-related problems.



The [Easy Health](#) website has gathered together various [easy-read leaflets](#) which will help people with learning disabilities to understand more about the effects of alcohol.

 EMAIL

PDF PAGE

 PRINT