



**Your guide to
making healthier
choices about alcohol**

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Alcohol consumption during coronavirus

People can drink more when feeling stressed or experiencing difficult life events so it's not surprising that some people are drinking more alcohol during the coronavirus pandemic.

We've seen images of people "panic buying" alcohol since lockdown started in March. Now new data from Alcohol Change UK shows people are not just stocking up for a rainy day. In a recent survey they found around one in five drinkers (21%) have been drinking more frequently since the lockdown.

We have also seen some positive changes; 1 in 3 are drinking less alcohol/have stopped drinking.

Why does it matter? Habits are formed quickly but can be hard to break. If we start drinking more now, not only do we face the risk of immediate impact such as on our health,

money, well-being, but also the risk of our alcohol consumption rising over the medium to long term. Alcohol's effects on mental health are particularly concerning during lockdown, when many of us are already under a great deal of stress.

This booklet provides information and advice about making healthier choices about alcohol.

Help and advice

Alcohol can affect different people in different ways. This means we may be at increased harm from alcohol even when drinking within recommended limits, especially if we have any health conditions or are on medications.

Why not have a read through this guide, do the quiz and see how you score.

Benefits of making healthier choices about your alcohol use:

Improve
your
health and
relationships



Reduce
the risk
of falls/
accidents



Improve
your
memory



Any
medication(s)
you take may
work better



Find new
hobbies
or take up
old interests



Save
money



Sleep better
and have
more energy



Improve
your chance
of staying
healthy for longer



Step 1: Keep track

Most people now drink at home more than anywhere else. At home it's easier to be overgenerous with measures and harder to keep track of how much you are drinking. Learning more about how much you're drinking or using a unit measure is a simple way to keep track and can help you keep an eye out for some of the problems even day-to-day drinking can cause.

Regularly drinking alcohol can:

Cause memory problems



Mean a poor night's sleep



Make you depressed or anxious



Put you over the drink driving limit



And as we age, alcohol affects us differently and can start causing us problems. It can:

Interact negatively with medications



Increase blood pressure



Increase the risk of injury or falls



Make health problems worse ie: Diabetes



What is a unit of alcohol?

Using units to keep track of your drinking is easier than it seems. Look on bottles and cans for the number of units in a drink or you can calculate your own with the formula below.

Here are some examples

PINT
LOWER STRENGTH
LAGER / BEER

568ml (pint)
ABV 3.8%

2.2 units



CAN AVERAGE
STRENGTH
LAGER / BEER

440ml
ABV 4.5%

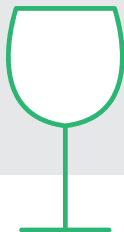
2 units



SMALL GLASS
WHITE / RED
/ ROSÉ
WINE

125ml
ABV 12%

1.5 units



SINGLE
SMALL SHOT
SPIRITS

25ml
ABV 40%

1 unit



Formula

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{strength (ABV)} \\ \times \\ \text{volume (ml)} \\ \div \\ 1000 \\ = \text{units} \end{array}$$

Step 2: Find out how you score

Below is a short quiz on your alcohol use.

Let's start by answering the following questions to see how you score.

	Scoring system					Your Score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2 – 4 times per month	2 – 3 times per week	4 + times per week	
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 9	10 +	
How often have you had 6 or more units if female or 8 or more units if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
Audit C - World Health Organisation						Total

How did you score?

Find out how you scored below and see if you could do more to reduce your risk.

The recommended lower risk guidelines are below to help you, or you may want to contact us for help and advice.

0 – 4

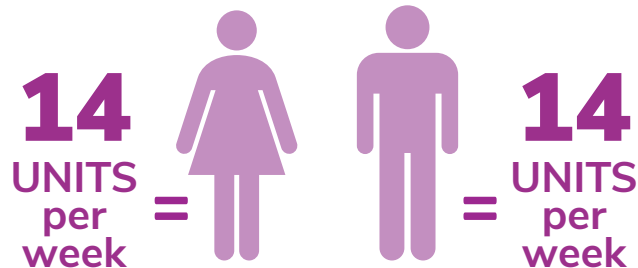
WELL DONE

You are a lower risk drinker and less likely to experience problems caused by alcohol

5 – 12

MIND YOURSELF

You may be drinking at a level that can cause problems for you now or in the future we would recommend speaking to your GP



If you do drink as much as 14 units per week, try to spread this evenly over 3 days or more

If you wish to cut down the amount you're drinking, a good way to help achieve this is to have several drink-free days each week

Step 3: Make simple changes

6 tips to make healthier choices about alcohol

LOWER YOUR RISK

Stay within the recommended guidelines of 14 units per week and spread these out over a few days.

KEEP TRACK

Our drinks diary can help you keep track of how much you're drinking.

Why not track you drinks for a few weeks, if you want any advice speak to your GP or local alcohol service.

KEEP ACTIVE

Look out for different activities in your area.

GIVE YOUR BODY A BREAK

Have at least 2-3 alcohol free days each week.

EAT SOMETHING

Have a meal when you are drinking or eat something beforehand.

KEEP HYDRATED

Have a non-alcoholic drink or water with or after each alcoholic drink. Sometimes we don't feel the effects right away and drink a little too quickly.

Drinks diary

It is important to have a look at your alcohol use over a period of time to see whether you can identify any patterns to your drinking.

Over the next few pages we have included some drinks diaries that can help you track your drinking.

Useful tips when using the diary:

Day: by tracking which days you tend to drink, you'll be able to determine whether there are any significant days of the week where you always drink. For example after work on a Friday. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is helpful to identify your reasons for drinking.

Time of day: this is a good indicator of your relationship with alcohol and may help to identify your reasons for drinking.

Social or solo: the details of how you drink will help you identify whether there are any underlying reasons for your alcohol use. For example, do you regularly drink on your own or find going to the pub is the only way you socialise.

What did I drink? it is important to consider the type and strength of the alcohol you drink as you may be able to make small changes, such as swapping to a weaker strength lager.

Units: measuring your units will allow you to have a realistic idea of the amount you drink as the size of glass and measure may vary. Your unit intake will let you see whether you are drinking over the guidelines.

Reason for drinking: this is about being clear with yourself about why you are drinking.

Drinks diary

[illegible]

Drinks diary

[illegible]

Setting goals

Look at your diary, are there any patterns you can see or changes you would like to make? There might be situations in which you drink more than you intended or times when you drink more often than you wanted. It can be useful to look at what triggers this; colleagues inviting you out after work or feeling you have had a bad day perhaps? Setting goals can help you make changes.

The simple planning tool below might be a good place to start.

If you would like any additional tools or want to discuss your goals then speak to your GP or call your local alcohol service on 01274 296023.

Identify the pattern you want to change:

Reason
for
change?

Set yourself actions to achieve change:

What?

Where?

When?

Your local alcohol service:

New Directions

We are here to support you if you want to make positive changes to your alcohol use. We work across the Bradford and Keighley district offering 1-1, group and peer support. We can support you with any questions or concerns you might have about alcohol.

We provide information, advice, treatment and support and can meet you in a range of different venues including GP surgeries, pharmacies and other local community venues.

We have changed our service delivery to make sure people stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic; as a result we are now mainly providing support over the telephone and/or via video calls.

Under normal circumstances you would be invited to attend the service where you would

be welcomed by a friendly face on reception, offered a hot drink then asked to take a seat and relax. The welcome groups are delivered by a friendly team of people who are here to introduce you to our service and explain what treatment offers are available.

You will receive a welcome pack and be able to ask any questions you may have. Following the session if treatment is something you wish to access you will leave with an appointment for an assessment.

**For more information please call our
Single Point of Contact (SPOC) line on
01274 296023**

Support online or over the phone

You can also find support remotely:

- Drinkline: a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their drinking, or someone else's. Call: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am–8pm, weekends 11am–4pm).
- Alcoholics Anonymous: the helpline is open 24/7 on 0800 9177 650. If you would prefer, you can also email them at: help@aamail.org or live chat via their website at: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
- You can join a SMART Recovery Meeting online here: www.smartrecovery.org.uk/online-meetings/
- Al-Anon which offers support and understanding to the families and friends of dependent drinkers. You can call their confidential helpline on: 020 7403 0888

(open 10am–10pm). There are lots more resources for families and friends here: www.alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help-now/family-and-friends

- Nacoe support anyone affected by their parent(s) drinking, including adults. You can find some of the questions that children often ask about alcohol and the effects on them and their family here: www.nacoe.org.uk/children/faqs.html For more information, visit: www.nacoe.org.uk call 0800 358 3456 or email: helpline@nacoe.org.uk You can also find them on Facebook and Twitter.

If you are looking for urgent support please contact the Samaritans, who are available 24/7 on 116 123 or [jo@samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

If you would like any further health related advice or support please see the council website: www.bradford.gov.uk/health/health-advice-and-support/coronavirus-covid-19-advice/#advice

The wording in this booklet can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille. Please call: 01274 437619.

