

## Simple steps to cutting down...

### Know your strengths

Knowing the strength of your drinks is essential. Use the guide in this leaflet or look on the label – many brands state their unit content as well as their percentage strength.

### Know your drinking pattern

Drinking is such a part of life it can be hard to figure out exactly how much we consume. Keep a drinking diary and note down what, how much and when you take a tippie.

### Watch your measures

Drinks poured at home, at parties and in many foreign bars are often larger than standard UK pub measures. If you drink at home, consider investing in a set of measures. Avoid 'topping up' so you can keep track more easily.



### Change your drink

Not all brands are the same strength – switch to a lower alcohol alternative. Make spirits into long drinks by adding mixers. Add soda water to wine or drink shandy instead of beer.

### Change the scene

Instead of pubs or clubs, try meeting mates at the cinema, the five-a-side pitches, bowling alley, gym or theatre.

### Use soft drink 'spacers'

When you're out, take a soft drink between alcoholic ones and drink less booze during the evening.

### Slow down

Pace yourself. Sip, don't gulp! If you're really thirsty, take a soft drink or water.

### Know how to refuse a drink

Decide for yourself when and how much you want to drink. Some people can be offended if you turn down a drink – that's their problem.

### Avoid drinking in rounds

If you've had enough, insist on a soft drink. If it's your round, get yourself a glass of something alcohol-free.

### Eat before and while you drink

Food makes the body absorb alcohol more slowly and so limits how quickly it gets into the bloodstream.

### Drink to a budget

Take a limited amount of cash out with you – no more than you need to stay sober, in control and get a taxi home.

### Be the designated driver

It's a perfect excuse to stay sober. Agree to drive everyone home and insist they buy your soft drinks and snacks for you!

### Talk through problems and worries

Stress and worries can influence how much we drink. Talking about them can be a good first step to resolving problems with alcohol. To speak to someone in confidence call Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 (6pm - 2am daily).

### Worried about your drinking?

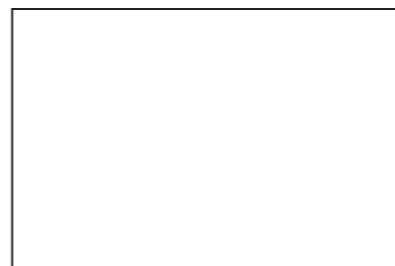
Call **DRINKLINE** free on **0800 7 314 314** at any time.

### Further information

Call **DRINKLINE** to order free copies of other leaflets in this series. Topics include stress, young people, women and alcohol, sensible drinking and how to recognise problem drinking.

For more tips and information about alcohol, visit [www.infoscotland.com/alcohol](http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol)

Find out more about healthy living at [www.healthyliving.gov.uk](http://www.healthyliving.gov.uk)



# Alcohol & healthy living

A guide to how you can enjoy alcohol and stay healthy.



healthier  
scotland  
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

We all need at least 2 days a week without alcohol.



Make your night last longer, use soft-drink 'spacers' between alcoholic drinks.



### Thinking about healthy living?

There's no reason why we can't enjoy our drink and stay healthy. Here's how...

### Drink sensibly

Adults are advised to stick to the following sensible limits:

**Men:**

No more than 3-4 units a day and no more than 21 units in one week.

**Women:**

No more than 2-3 units a day and no more than 14 units a week.

We all need at least 2 days a week without alcohol.

### Why does it matter?

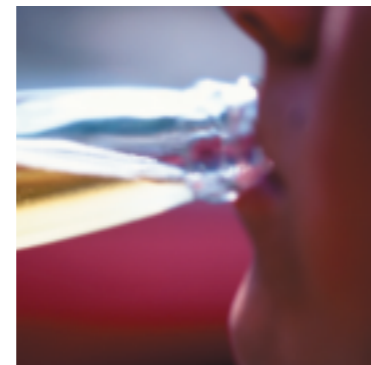
Doctors agree that drinking more than the **sensible limit** damages health in the short and long-term.



### When not to drink

Avoid alcohol

- during pregnancy
- when driving or operating machinery
- before exercising or playing sport
- when taking certain medications
- if you're feeling low or anxious



### What's a 'unit'?

A unit equals 10ml of pure alcohol. That's the amount the body can safely get rid of in an hour.

### How many units in a drink?

 35ml measure gin/rum/vodka/whisky:	1.4 units
 330ml bottle standard lager/beer:	1.7 units
 1 pint medium strength lager/beer:	2.8 units
 1 pint standard lager/beer:	2.3 units
 1 pint strong cider:	3.4 units
 700ml bottle whisky:	28 units
 275ml bottle alcopop:	1.5 units
 175ml glass standard size wine:	2.1 units
 750ml bottle wine:	9.8 units

The units above are **average** levels – the strength of drinks varies by brand. Many display their unit content on the label to help you drink at a sensible level.

### Why drink less?

Too much drink damages the body and makes a healthy lifestyle harder to keep up:

- alcohol contains lots of calories and can contribute to weight gain
- hangovers mean we can't exercise properly and are less likely to try
- alcohol disrupts sleep (a vital part of good health)
- hung-over and tired people tend to eat more junk food
- drinking to cope with stress, anxiety or depression only makes things worse
- drinking can affect your relationships with your partner, friends and family
- alcohol can affect your ability to conceive

