



Well Being Fortnightly

Well Being Edition 8

Alcohol Awareness Special

22nd January 2021

Welcome

Welcome to our special alcohol awareness newsletter packed full of information around the benefits of cutting down the amount of alcohol that we consume. With many of us partaking in dry January now is a good time for us to reflect and think about the amount we drink daily, weekly, monthly and throughout the year.



Super Statistics

If you are currently undertaking dry January, fantastic but if you are not then why not consider picking a different month during this year to give up alcohol? Those who give up drinking for a month report:

70% report being able to sleep better

86% report being able to save money over the month

65% of people report an improvement in their general health

A month off according to a report published in 2018 found that it:

- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces diabetes risk
- Lowers cholesterol
- Reduces levels of cancer-related proteins in the blood.



Frightening Facts

A report commissioned by alcohol change UK in November 2020 raised that over half of drinkers (53%) said they have drunk alcohol for a mental health reason. Another statistic was that during lockdown 1 in 3 (29%) have been drinking at increasing or high risk levels and from those surveyed 44% reported that increased drinking worsened their mental well being.

Other worrying facts included:

- In England there are an estimated 586,780 dependent drinkers. Only 18% are receiving treatment.
- 24% of adults in England and Scotland regularly drink over the Chief Medical Officer's low-risk guidelines [1, 16], and 27% of drinkers in Great Britain binge drink on their heaviest drinking days (over 8 units for men and over 6 units for women) [2].

This is just the tip of the iceberg in relation to the statistics. To read more facts then [Click Here](#)

How Much?

Most of us feel that we know when we've overdone it, but sometimes drinking can 'creep up' on us and we find that we're drinking more than we would like

Around 1 in 5 of us say that we regularly drink above the recommended low-risk drinking guidelines of 14 units a week

There are certain signs to watch out for if you're worried you, or someone close to you, might be drinking too much, including:

- Having frequent cravings to drink alcohol
- Being unable to control the amount of alcohol being drunk
- Hiding drinking from friends and loved ones
- Becoming upset or stressed, or having difficulty making decisions, when going without alcohol

To see if you are drinking within the safe levels then please click on the link below to undertake the 'lower my drinking' quiz

[Lower My Drinking](#)



Top Tips

Below are some top tips on how you could be a healthier drinker:

- **Drink and think in units.** Remember it's safest not to drink more than 14 units per week; that's about six pints of normal strength beer or six standard glasses of wine.
- **Keep a drinking diary.** Recording what you drink for a few weeks will help you understand your drinking pattern, so you can decide if you want to make a change. Download the free [Try Dry app](#) to help you keep track.
- **Have a few days off every week.** It's a good way to cut down and give your body a rest. Consider taking an extended break like having a [Dry January](#) or other dry month.
- **Try alcohol-free alternatives.** Alcohol-free beers, ciders and wines are now widely available and more and more of them are winning awards in place of their full-strength competitors. Check out the [no- and low-alcohol reviews](#) on the Alcohol Change UK website to help you get started.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** Talk to your GP or visit the [Alcohol Change UK website](#) to find out about getting support to cut down

The NHS suggests five other key ways to improve your mental health and wellbeing

- **Getting active** - when you exercise your brain releases chemicals which can help to improve your mood. Try exercising outdoors to give yourself an extra boost
- **Learning new skills** - like cooking, DIY or gardening, which can help you build a sense of purpose
- **Spending more time with friends and family** - which provides emotional support as well as allowing you to support others
- **Giving to others** - for example by volunteering your time or skills or other small acts of kindness. This can boost your mood and create a sense of self-worth
- **Practising mindfulness** – this is about paying more attention to the present moment, which can help us relax and enjoy the world around us more



The following interactive tools allows you to total up your drinks consumed over a week

[Unit calculator](#) | [Alcohol Change UK](#)

Super Support

If you do feel like your drinking is getting a little out of control then the following may be of help:

Turning Point (Substance misuse service)

Address:

55 Green Street
Gillingham
Kent
ME7 1AE

Phone: 0300 123 1560

Website: [Turning Point](#)



If you are worried about a family member or friend or are affected by someone around you drinking then you can access support here

[Family and friends](#) | [Alcohol Change UK](#)

Digestible Document

This week we pick out some of the key points from a report published by the Scottish parliament which asked children about their exposure to alcohol. The report was titled 'Make alcohol less visible, say children' Key points of the report said:

- Children see alcohol everywhere - in the fridge, the park and advertised on TV – and they don't want to, research shows
- Alcohol should not be used to sponsor events where children may be present and calls for more bins to be provided, given that one of the myriad ways in which children say they encounter alcohol is in the form of broken glass and bottles left in play areas and parks.
- One child commented: "The Champions League sponsor is Heineken. The logo is green and black. At the start of the match, they announce the sponsor and you can see the adverts all over the stadium."
- Another said: "Sometimes in the park, the bins have been turned upside down and there are empty bottles and rubbish all over the ground."
- One member of the Children's Parliament said: "No one asks us about alcohol and suddenly when you think about it, you realise it's all around you all the time."
- Feeling "unsafe" was one of the most common issues that children raised when asked how alcohol impacted on their lives. The children said that they could be physically "hurt" by adults under the influence of alcohol either "by accident" or on purpose.
- The report says: "Children consider their physical safety to be at risk when surrounded by adults drinking or as a result of alcohol-related debris such as broken glass and bottles 'left behind' or, in some cases, 'thrown' in public spaces and parks."
- She added: "What this work has shown us for the first time is how often children are seeing alcohol, from opening the fridge at breakfast time, throughout the day in shops and on billboards to in their homes and on TV at night – and the negative effects it can have on their wellbeing."