



## Alcohol problems are common

Never feel you're alone. 49% of men and 38% of women regularly exceed daily and/or weekly limits in a typical week. Hundreds of thousands of people – friends, family members and co-workers – are negatively affected by someone else's drinking.

## Believe change is possible

Many people recover from alcohol problems. The first step is to admit that there is a problem. This can be difficult but there are services throughout Scotland that can help. Some of their staff will have overcome similar problems themselves.

## Try to cut down

If you can, cut down and stick to the sensible drinking guidelines. It can be hard to know exactly how much we're drinking so consider keeping a drinking diary.

## Find a healthier balance

Cutting down benefits health, reduces stress, improves sleep, promotes weight loss and can help lift feelings of depression and anxiety.

## Alcohol dependence

Dependence makes it harder to change your habits. Family doctors can refer people to local services that can help. There are also many groups and projects that can give extra support to the person, their family, friends and colleagues.



## Feelings and emotions

The reasons why we get into difficulties with alcohol are complex and are often bound up with our feelings about ourselves and our place in the world. Exploring and becoming more aware of our feelings and attitudes is an important part of resolving problems.



## Getting help

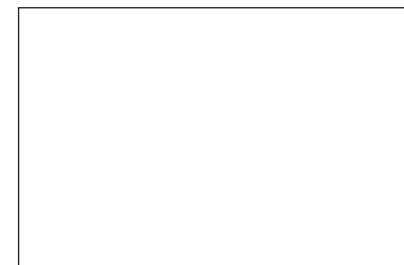
If you're concerned about your drinking visit your GP or go to our alcohol website [www.drinksmarter.org](http://www.drinksmarter.org) for details of services, supports and other useful websites and resources.

## Worried about your own or someone else's drinking?

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

## Further information

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



# Recognising problem drinking

Find out how to spot a problem with alcohol and what you can do about it.



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



It's a mistake to think only alcoholics have a problem with alcohol.

## If you're reading this, you're probably already concerned that you or someone you know is drinking too much.

### The costs of problem drinking


Spending too much on alcohol causes financial problems for some, but if we drink too much there can be other costs to pay – in our careers, in our relationships and with our health.

### What is meant by 'problem drinking'?

Problem drinking means drinking more than the sensible drinking guidelines on a regular basis. Some people drink lots and appear to be fine. In truth, they won't be able to avoid problems with their health and other areas of their lives in the long term.

#### Sensible Drinking Guidelines

 **2-3**  
units daily

 **3-4**  
units daily

### What are the sensible drinking guidelines?

Women shouldn't regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day and men 3-4. Aim to have at least 2 alcohol-free days a week.

Avoid alcohol if pregnant or trying to conceive.

### What's a 'unit'?

A unit equals 10ml of pure alcohol. That's the amount an adult body can safely get rid of in an hour. Remember, the number of units in a drink vary dependent on size and alcohol content (% ABV).

### How many units in a drink?

 **Single measure spirit**  
1 unit ABV 40% 25ml

 **Alcopop**  
1.4 units ABV 5% 275ml

 **Standard glass of wine**  
2.1 units ABV 12% 175ml


 **Pint of lager**  
2.8 units ABV 5% 568ml

 **Bottle of cider**  
1.4 units ABV 5% 275ml

Drink – it adds up to more than you think

[drinksmarter.org](http://drinksmarter.org)

#### Sensible Drinking Guidelines

 **2-3**  
units daily

 **3-4**  
units daily

Aim to have at least 2 alcohol-free days a week.

The units above are **average** levels – the strength of drinks varies by brand.

### Signs of problem drinking

Many people learn how to cover up their alcohol problems. These problems aren't always visible to others, but if we're honest with ourselves, we can spot the signs:



- not being able to socialise without a drink
- struggling at work or in education because of hangovers
- having to take 'sickies' to recover
- poor concentration
- spending lots on alcohol
- arguing with family or friends
- feeling irritable without a drink
- becoming defensive or angry when drinking habits are discussed or challenged
- feeling we need to hide some or all of our drinking from others
- drinking to get going in the morning (including 'hair of the dog')
- getting into fights or trouble with the police
- waking up with unexplained injuries or bruises
- drink driving
- drinking to get drunk

- drinking excessively at weekends and during time off
- not having days without alcohol
- starting drinking earlier in the day than previously
- gaining weight
- not being able to get pregnant
- periods becoming irregular
- problems getting or maintaining an erection
- getting into situations where your safety might be at risk
- losing control while drinking
- having sex you later regret
- not being able to remember what happened when you were drinking.

If we drink more than the **sensible drinking guidelines** and are having problems like these, there's a good chance alcohol could be to blame.

