

Improving health together



www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/stayinghealthy

Public Health Factsheet

Welcome to this edition of Improving Health Together which focuses on the issue of alcohol.

For many people alcohol plays a part in their lives. However, every year thousands of people in North Yorkshire and York cause harm to themselves or others by drinking too much.

Scarborough Borough Home Drinking Campaign
Local partners have worked together to develop a media campaign highlighting the problem of home drinking. The campaign links to national messages, but uses quotes from local people and is specific to Whitby, Filey and Scarborough.

Three target groups have been identified and there are different images/materials for these groups:

- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Younger people drinking before they go out (preloading)
- ◆ Female, older “at home” drinkers.

To obtain copies of the campaign resources please contact Jo Ireland, Community Partnerships Manager on 01723 384315 or email jo.ireland@scarborough.gov.uk. See our website for more information: www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/Alcohol/LocalInitiatives.htm.

Alcohol

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Sensible drinking. How much is too much?

Sensible drinking is drinking in a way that is unlikely to cause harm to yourself or others. The Government advises that:



MEN
Should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day.



WOMEN
Should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day.



PREGNANT WOMEN
If you are pregnant or trying to conceive, it is recommended that you avoid drinking alcohol. But if you do drink, it should be no more than 1-2 units once or twice a week.




‘Regularly’ means drinking every day or most days of the week. A break of 48 hours should be taken after a heavy session to let the body recover. It is not safe to save up daily units and drink them all in one go. Many people underestimate how much they actually drink.

Risk	Men	Women	Common Effects
Lower Risk	No more than 3-4 units per day on a regular basis	No more than 2-3 units per day on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased relaxation ◆ Sociability ◆ Reduced risk of heart disease (for men over 40 and post menopausal women)
Increasing Risk	More than 3-4 units per day on a regular basis	More than 2-3 units per day on a regular basis	Progressively increasing risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low energy ◆ Memory loss ◆ Relationship problems ◆ Depression ◆ Insomnia ◆ Impotence ◆ Injury ◆ Alcohol dependence ◆ High blood pressure ◆ Liver disease ◆ Cancer
Higher Risk	More than 8 units per day on a regular basis or more than 50 units per week	More than 6 units per day on a regular basis or more than 35 units per week	


What is a unit?

A unit of alcohol is 10ml of pure alcohol. Counting units of alcohol can help to keep track of the amount drunk. The list below shows the number of units of alcohol in common drinks:


One unit is equal to:




Half pint of regular beer, lager or cider




1 small glass of wine



1 single measure of spirits




1 small glass of sherry




1 single measure of aperitifs

The following quantities of alcohol contain more than 1 unit:




2

Pint of Regular Beer/Lager/Cider




3

Pint of Premium Beer/Lager/Cider



1.5


Alcopop or can/bottle of Regular Lager



2

440ml


Can of Premium Lager or Strong Beer



4


440ml

Can of Super Strength Lager



2

Glass of Wine (175ml)



9

Bottle of Wine

Harms associated with the use of alcohol

Harms to health	Crime and anti-social behaviour
Loss of productivity in the workplace	Social harms, such as family breakdown

- ◆ 20% of patients presenting to primary care are likely to be excessive drinkers and problem drinkers are known to consult their GPs twice as often than the average patient. The most common complaints are gastrointestinal, psychiatric and accidents.
- ◆ 1 in 4 acute male admissions are alcohol-related.
- ◆ At least 5-7% of diagnosed cases of hypertension are due to heavy drinking and it is the most common cause after obesity.
- ◆ Alcohol misuse is implicated in 50% of violent crimes and around a third of all domestic violence is linked to alcohol.
- ◆ Around £1 in every £3 spent in A&E is alcohol related.
- ◆ Around one million children live in families where one or both parents misuse alcohol.
- ◆ Around 25% of children aged 11-15 drink alcohol, drinking an average of around 10 units per week.

Binge drinking can cause potential harm to others through:

- ◆ accidents – increased risk of injury and death from fire and car crashes
- ◆ violence – physical and sexual assaults and domestic violence
- ◆ argumentative behaviour
- ◆ unsafe sex
- ◆ emotional and financial problems.



Health benefits of alcohol

Alcohol can protect against coronary heart disease, however the protective effect is only significant for men over 40 and post-menopausal women, and the maximum benefit is gained from drinking between 1 and 2 units a day.

Both non-drinkers and drinkers can do other things to reduce their risk of coronary heart disease, i.e. stopping smoking, eating a healthy diet, being physically active.

Benefits of cutting down

Psychological/Social/ Financial	Physical
◆ Improved mood	◆ Sleep better
◆ Improved relationships	◆ More energy
◆ Reduced risks of drink driving	◆ Lose weight
◆ Save money	◆ Reduced risk of high blood pressure
	◆ Reduced risks of liver disease
	◆ Improved memory
	◆ Better physical shape
	◆ No hangovers
	◆ Reduced risk of cancer
	◆ Reduced risk of injury
	◆ Reduced risk of brain damage

FACT: It is NOT true that Guinness is rich in iron – you would need to drink more than 35 pints per day to get the recommended daily intake of iron.

Identification and brief advice

Evidence shows that clinically significant reductions in drinking and alcohol-related problems can follow from brief interventions.

For every eight people who receive simple alcohol advice, one will reduce their drinking to within lower-risk levels. This compares favourably with smoking where only one in twenty will act on the advice given. As the evidence base is strong for brief interventions with alcohol and smoking and given that 80% of dependent drinkers smoke, local consideration could be given to offer combined services, in areas where it would positively impact on their clients.

A new, free alcohol identification and brief advice e-learning tool for pharmacists is now available at: www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/elearning/IBA/

Consistent, accredited training is an essential factor in effective delivery of brief interventions. A free, short e-learning course on how to identify alcohol problems and offer simple brief advice in healthcare settings is available from e-Learning for Healthcare. The course is accredited by the Royal College of Nursing, see www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/alcohol/index.html

Nurses are as effective as doctors in producing behaviour change and the most positive effects have been observed with adolescents, adults, older adults and pregnant women.

According to NICE guidance brief advice should be:

- ◆ Based on recognised, evidenced based resource
- ◆ Based on FRAMES principles (feedback, responsibility, advice, menu, empathy, self-efficacy)
- ◆ Take 5-15 minutes and should:
 - ◆ cover the potential harm caused by their level of drinking and reasons for changing the behaviour, including the health and wellbeing benefits
 - ◆ cover the barriers to change
 - ◆ outline practical strategies to help reduce alcohol consumption (the 'menu' component of FRAMES)
 - ◆ lead to a set of goals.

Applying the brief interventions approach advocated in 'Making Every Contact Count' has the potential to make dramatic cost savings across the NHS system. Investment in prevention significantly reduces the costs of acute care. Research indicates that brief interventions reduce alcohol use by 15%.

The following questions could be asked:

- ◆ Do you feel you should cut down your drinking?
- ◆ Has anyone ever criticised your drinking?
- ◆ Have you ever felt guilty about how much you drink?
- ◆ Do you need a drink to steady your nerves in the morning?

If the answer is YES to two or more questions the patient/

client could be psychologically and/or physically dependent on alcohol and should be offered help. They should be given information about the effects of alcohol, ways to cut down, ways to get further information and support and be encouraged to reduce consumption.

Once they know the facts, many people can quite easily revert back to sensible drinking if they are drinking above the safe limits. However, dependent drinkers may need referral for specialist help.

How to drink sensibly

- ◆ Stick to the recommended guidelines.
- ◆ Try to have days without drinking alcohol.
- ◆ Alternate alcoholic drinks with ones containing no alcohol.
- ◆ Try not to drink on an empty stomach.
- ◆ Avoid buying in rounds, and drink slowly.
- ◆ Keep a daily drinks diary to monitor consumption.
- ◆ Dilute drinks – mix wine with soda, beer with lemonade. If drinking spirits, add lots of tonic, soda water or juice.
- ◆ Avoid spirits and extra strong lager or cider.

Some physical changes due to harmful drinking

Dry skin: alcohol dehydrates the body and skin, because it blocks the release of anti-diuretic hormones, so the kidneys get rid of too much water.

Broken veins: alcohol dilates blood vessels near the surface of the skin, causing ugly red capillaries or veins, especially around the nose and cheeks.

Bloodshot eyes: alcohol can inflame and enlarge the small blood vessels on the surface of the eyes.

Weight gain: see table below.

When weight watching, also watch alcohol intake. The recommended daily calorie intake for women is 2,000 and for men 2,500.

Drink	Units	Calories	Food equivalent
White wine (175ml)	2.1	130	A bag of crisps
Red wine (175ml)	2.1	120	A slice of cheese and tomato pizza
Lager or beer (a pint)	2.3	170	A small sausage roll
Cider (a pint)	3.4	200	A mince pie
Tequila (25ml)	1.0	160	A doughnut
Alcopop (275ml)	1.4	200	A chicken drumstick

www.drinking.nhs.uk/

North Yorkshire and York Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Key organisations and partnerships in the county recognise alcohol as a priority to be addressed and have agreed a county wide Alcohol Strategy, setting out how we will work jointly to reduce alcohol related harm in North Yorkshire and York. The Strategy is available at www.nypct.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/Alcohol/KeyDocuments.htm.

Other local alcohol strategies can also be found at the above link.

Key Documents

NHS Yorkshire and the Humber Delivering Healthy Ambitions—Better for Less Briefings (2010)
www.healthyambitions.co.uk/betterforless/

- Tackling Alcohol Abuse
- Making Every Contact Count

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2010)
Alcohol-use disorders: preventing harmful drinking
<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH24>

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008)
Antenatal Care CG62

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11947

Department of Health (2007) *Safe. Sensible. Social. The next steps in the National Alcohol Strategy*

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075218

Department of Health (2006) *Models of Care for Alcohol Misusers* www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4136806

National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (2006)
Review of the Effectiveness of Treatment for Alcohol Problems www.nta.nhs.uk/publications/documents/nta_review_of_the_effectiveness_of_treatment_for_alcohol_problems_fullreport_2006_alcohol2.pdf

Local Alcohol Services

The following local non-statutory services offer confidential, free, advice, information and support for anyone concerned about their own or anyone else's drinking. They accept self referrals or referrals from professionals.

- ◆ Craven Drug & Alcohol Agency—01756 794362
- ◆ Hambleton & Richmondshire Community Addictions Service—01609 780486
- ◆ Harrogate Drug and Alcohol Agency—01423 525999
- ◆ The Cambridge Centre, Scarborough—01723 367475
- ◆ The Cambridge Centre, Whitby—01947 601601
- ◆ Selby District Alcohol Service—01757 293600
- ◆ York Alcohol Advice Service—01904 652104

Statutory community alcohol services providing assessment, community detoxification, etc., are available across the county through GP practices.

Production Team:

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Websites

DRINKAWARE.CO.UK

www.drinkaware.co.uk

Interactive site with information about alcohol & drinking, practical tips to cut down, drinks diary & questionnaires.

Down Your Drink

www.downyourdrink.org.uk

A six week online programme to help users reduce drinking and develop safer drinking habits. Free and confidential.



Alcohol Concern

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

The national agency on alcohol misuse. General information about alcohol including useful factsheets, call 020 7264 0510.



Adfam

www.adfam.org.uk

Information and advice for families of alcohol and drug users. The website has a list of local family support services. Call 020 7928 889.



Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

A peer support organisation to help people stop drinking. Local groups throughout the county 0845 769 7555.



NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/livewell/alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx

A national online service that gives information, advice, interactive tools and a postcode service finder.



Change4Life

www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/pages/alternative-drink-options.aspx

Information on drink swaps as part of a Change4Life



Local Alcohol Profiles for England

www.nwph.net/alcohol/lape/pctProfile.aspx?reg=q32

Profiles for each LA and PCT in England.



Order your free resources

Contact the **Department of Health** on 0300 123 1002 or www.orderline.dh.gov.uk to order Alcohol Effects posters.

Drinkaware

www.drinkaware.co.uk/resources

Unit calculator, drinking diary available, together with downloadable factsheets.

Change4Life

www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/

Information from the NHS Drinking website will transfer to Change4Life. Tools include drinks diaries/planners, drink swap campaign materials and an alcohol tracker.

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