



# Helpline

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## Drinking

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND COUNSELLING SERVICE



Printing Charity

Welfare. Education. Heritage.

This leaflet is designed to help you become aware of your **drinking** level, help you to make choices about what you are drinking when you do and find help and support if needed.

When drinking becomes out of control it can be a problem, not only for you as an individual, but also for friends, family and those closest to you. It might have an effect on your relationships and your job.

Drinking levels can range from safe, hazardous to dependent. The test in this booklet can help to identify or clarify any concerns over your own or someone else's drinking habits.



# How many units?

Type of alcohol	Measure	ml	ABV*	Units
Spirits	Average home measure	75ml	40%	3
	Single pub measure	25ml	40%	1
Alcopop	One bottle	330ml	5.5%	2
Wine	One bottle	750ml	12%	9
	Average home glass	200ml	12%	2.4
	Large pub glass	175ml	12%	2
	Small pub glass	125ml	12%	1.5
Wine (lower strength)	Small pub glass	125ml	9%	1
Lager	Super strength can	440ml	9%	4
	Bottle	330ml	5.5%	2
Beer/Lager	Pint or can	500ml	3.5-4%	2

\*ABV: Percentage of alcohol by volume. This number can be found on the packaging of your drink.

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test has been developed by the World Health Organisation. Have a look at the following questions and consider what

you would answer for each of them. Answering these questions can help you to see where you may have developed habits and identify any patterns in your drinking.

# The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
<b>How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?</b>	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times a month	2-3 times a week	4 or more times a week
<b>How many units do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?</b>	1 or 2	3 or 4	5 or 6	7 - 9	10 or more
<b>How often do you have more than six units on one occasion?</b>	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily
<b>How many times in the last year have you been unable to stop drinking once you started?</b>	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily
<b>How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking?</b>	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily
<b>How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?</b>	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily
<b>How often during the last year have you needed a drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?</b>	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily

	<b>0 points</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>2 points</b>	<b>3 points</b>	<b>4 points</b>
<b>How many times in the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?</b>	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times a month	2-3 times a week	4 or more times a week
<b>Have you, or anyone else, been injured as a result of your drinking?</b>	Never		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, in the last year
<b>Has a relative, friend, or health professional, been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?</b>			Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, in the last year

### AUDIT score

A score of 0-7 would put you at a safe level.

A score of 8 - 14 would put you at a hazardous level.

This is a level of drinking which can carry some risks to your health. Consider reminding yourself of the national guidelines for sensible drinking, which are four units a day for men and three for women, to minimise damaging your health. There are certain actions you can get into the habit of doing to reduce your intake without taking away from the enjoyment of social situations:

- Have a long soft drink or water before starting alcohol.
- Eat when you drink but try and avoid salty snacks as they can make you want more to drink.
- Have a glass of water next to your drink so if you feel thirsty you don't just reach for alcohol to quench your thirst.

A score of 15 -40 would put you at dependent level.

The following symptoms or behaviours might be recognisable if you find yourself with a score in this level:

- Rarely stopping after more than a couple of drinks
- Feeling agitated when alcohol is not available
- Getting angry when others criticise your drinking
- Blaming people around you or your circumstances for drinking

It is normal to not want to accept you might have a problem around drinking, but this is the first step in acting. The longer you leave things, the harder it will be. You may choose to limit your drinking rather than abstaining completely. Cutting out alcohol completely might seem unbearable, but it is believed to offer the best chance of recovery, which many people have managed. Remember, you do not have to do it alone. You are more likely to succeed with help from others and people will not judge you for asking for help.

# Are you worried about someone?

Living or being close to someone who may have an alcohol dependency can be quite distressing. You may feel powerless, anxious, annoyed, or even feel guilty. When drinking becomes a familiar habit of someone close around you, you may not even think of them as having an issue. However, recognising that alcohol is a problem for this person can be a relief to know and realise the cause of any arguments or irrational behaviour. Children can suffer being in an atmosphere where parents or family members are unpredictable, and the effects of drinking can take over family life.

## What you can do

- Decide on a time to have a serious conversation with them. Be clear and direct about the problems that their drinking may be causing and suggest positive action.
- Avoid dropping hints or any snide remarks as this can build up as resentment, which is not constructive.
- Confide in a friend or contact Al-Anon for support and guidance.
- Do not hide alcohol or pour it away as this can encourage childish behaviours.
- Do not feel responsible for their actions.
- Try to refrain from justifying why they are drinking. This is called colluding and will only make it easier for the drinker to continue what they are doing and not change their actions.
- Try to maintain a non-confrontational discussion. There is a chance that when you bring up the subject, the drinker may get angry. If you find it becomes difficult to talk to them, you might need the help of friends or family.
- Try to find out as much as you can about local resources and how they might be able to work.

**If you find yourself or any children at risk of physical danger, you should take immediate action.**

### **Finding help**

**Alcohol Agencies** - Check under 'Alcohol' in your local phone book. Alcohol agencies offer free and confidential advice.

**AA** - Alcoholics Anonymous is a self-help organisation with local groups to support those who are wishing to recover from dependency.

### **Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire**

A network offering support to friends and family of alcoholics, whether they are in recovery or not. It offers a way to meet and talk to other people who have similar stories to tell. Alateen is part of Al-Anon and is for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics aged between 12 and 17.

**Alcohol Change UK** - provides fact sheets and alcohol-related research on its website. It can also help to put you in touch with your local advice or treatment centres.

**Drinkline** - runs a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their own drinking or someone else's, offering telephone advice and support.

**Doctor or GP** - You may be able to seek advice from your family doctor or GP but they may not be as knowledgeable as a specialist agency. If you feel you aren't getting enough support from them, consider contacting other means of support on this list.

**Call our helpline to speak to a trained counsellor. Our information and advice specialists can also provide practical support on 0333 212 3534.**



The Printing Charity's helpline provides confidential, practical, and emotional support 365 days a year, free to access whenever you need. The helpline gives you access to information and advice on areas including family and personal issues, personal finance, the workplace, and wellbeing.

**The following booklets are also available:**

#### **Bereavement**

Checklists of the practical matters that have to be dealt with when someone dies. It also outlines the 'normal' path of grief.

#### **Childcare**

A practical guide to finding the right childcare for your family, the help available, and checklists for interviewing

#### **Dealing with Debt**

There is often more leeway than you think. This is a step-by-step guide to assessing your position, dealing with creditors, and creating a workable solution.

#### **Elderly Relatives**

An elderly relative can be a source of concern. This booklet provides information and advice on managing accommodation, finances, and funding.

#### **Family Breakdown**

Advice on the decision to separate, the practical implications for now and the future

**To discuss these or any other issues in confidence, call The Printing Charity's Helpline to speak to a counsellor or an information and advice specialist.**

**Free, confidential helpline**

**0333 212 3534**

**Helpline** 

**[www.theprintingcharity.org.uk/helpline](http://www.theprintingcharity.org.uk/helpline)**