

How many units in a drink?

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

Something to think about

- Drinking alcohol reduces our inhibitions and we may behave differently.
- Many drunk people make decisions or behave in ways which they later regret.
- Acting silly may soon be forgotten, but the consequences of breaking the law, fighting and arguing, unprotected or regretted sex may be more serious.
- The day after drinking we may feel anxious and depressed, which also affects our behaviour and may make us drink again to cope.
- We need to make sure we only drink sensible quantities at suitable times and places. Binge drinking should be avoided, and never drink and drive.

For more information

Contact the national alcohol helpline, Drinkline Scotland on **0800 7 314 314**.

Contact your local alcohol counselling agency – look under “alcohol” in the phone book or check the Alcohol Focus Scotland website.



Alcohol and Behaviour



Local agency details:



Alcohol Focus Scotland
2nd Floor 166 Buchanan Street Glasgow G1 2LW

Tel: 0141 572 6700 **Email:** enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Registered Scottish Charity SC009538

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

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For most people who drink, alcohol is a source of pleasure and enjoyment. But sometimes when drinking, we may behave in ways that can get us or others into trouble.

Go on, take a drink

In the UK it is often seen as acceptable to “binge drink” – an all or nothing approach to alcohol. We may drink a lot on certain occasions like weekends and holidays. This large consumption of alcohol leads to becoming very drunk and our behaviour becomes less controlled.

People are often unable to perform simple tasks after relatively modest amounts of alcohol, so the combination of less control of what we do and less ability to do it can be lethal!

Alcohol makes us feel more relaxed, but also less inhibited, and in some situations this leads to arguments and fights, unprotected or regretted sex, law breaking and accidents. A sobering fact is that alcohol is a factor in many assaults, murder and rape cases.



Is alcohol to blame?

It's not true to say that alcohol causes crime or gets us into trouble. That's something that only we can do. The effect alcohol has on our behaviour is not only related to the amount of alcohol but also the situation and our feelings at the time. Some people become excitable, “wild” or angry when they are drunk but others feel depressed, “love everyone” or fall asleep.

It appears that in different cultures we learn different ways of behaving which we associate with drinking alcohol. In our culture, we often link drinking with acting aggressively, shouting, flirting, “letting our hair down” and emotional outbursts. This contrasts sharply with our more controlled way of behaving in general. It could be why we use the excuse of drinking to let off steam!

Alcohol, mood and behaviour

- Alcohol can change our mood, making us feel more relaxed, merry, aggressive, or depressed and suicidal when we are drinking.
- Our moods affect our behaviour, so the impact of alcohol on our mood will have an associated impact on our behaviour.
- Drinking may then apparently change our behaviour at the time, but it can also change our behaviour afterwards.

- As our bodies cope with the rapid increase of alcohol in the bloodstream, and then flushing this out again, we can feel jumpy, anxious and miserable.
- The next day our behaviour can be affected by this mood swing. For some people this leads them to drink again to dampen these feelings, and this increases their general feelings of anxiety and depression.
- This can colour the way they see their lives and everyday behaviour.

Take it easy...

Sensible limits

Men: No more than 3-4 units a day and no more than 21 units in a 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. Doctors agree that drinking more than the sensible limit damages health in the short and long term.