



WHY HAVE THE GUIDELINES CHANGED?

The old unit guidelines hadn't been reviewed since 1995. During their current review the four UK Chief Medical Officers found significant new evidence on the effects of alcohol that was not available at the time when the original guidelines were produced.

In particular, there is now much stronger evidence available that the risk of cancers, especially breast cancer, increases directly in line with the consumption of alcohol.

The idea of counting alcohol units was first introduced in the UK in 1987 to help people keep track of their drinking. Knowing your units should help you to stay in control of your drinking and reduce the risk of harming your health and wellbeing.

HELP AND SUPPORT

However, if you feel that you, or someone you care about, would benefit from talking to a professional about your/their drinking there are a range of services available that can help. As a first step talk to your GP or for further information on local drug and alcohol services in your area go to:

www.drugsandalcoholni.info and click on the 'Services Near You' section.

GET IN TOUCH

If you are a community or stakeholder organisation with a need or interest in finding out more about alcohol use/misuse and/or awareness-raising your local Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (DACT) Connections Service should be your first port of call in relation to any alcohol and/or drug related concern or query that you may have - they will be able to advise you on how they, or your local DACT, can help.

For further information contact:

BDACT Connections Service
Tel: 028 9590 1845 • Email: connections@bdact.info



ALCOHOL UNIT

GUIDANCE





14
units (max)
a week for both
men & women

The four UK Chief Medical Officers have set a maximum weekly limit which is the same for both men and women to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level.

DON'T save up your units rather aim to spread them evenly across the week and to have at least 2 alcohol free days during that week!

The number of units in a drink is based on the size of the drink as well as its alcohol strength.

$$\frac{\text{Strength (ABV)} \times \text{volume (ml)}}{1,000} = \text{units}$$

- Drink more slowly, drink with food and alternate your alcoholic drinks with water or a soft drink



If you have one or two heavy drinking sessions you increase the risk of death from long-term illnesses, accidents and injuries.

- premium pint of larger, bitter or cider (5% ABV) contains 3 units
- An ordinary strength pint of larger, bitter or cider (3-4% ABV) contains 2.5 units



- A large 250ml glass of wine (12% ABV) contains 3 units
- A standard 175ml glass of wine (12% ABV) contains 2 units



To reduce the risk limit the total amount that you drink on any one occasion.

- A double measure of spirits (2x35ml at 40% ABV) contains 3 units
- A single measure of spirits (1x35ml at 40% ABV) contains 1.5 units



PREGNANCY

If you are pregnant or planning pregnancy

- The safest option is not to drink alcohol at all
- The more you drink the greater risk to your baby
- If you have already been drinking during pregnancy you should avoid drinking further
- If you are worried about how much you've been drinking when pregnant talk to your doctor or midwife

