

# Alcohol misuse – know your units, and the risks

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Alcohol misuse is when you drink in a way that's harmful, or when you're dependent on alcohol. To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level, both men and women are advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units a week.



Binge drinking (more than four units at any one time) and drinking to get drunk, common among young adults, is bad for your health and should always be avoided.

Basically, you should not save up all your units for the week and drink them all in one go, while studies have shown that young female British women have amongst the highest intakes of alcohol in the world.

Binge drinking can cause a range of social and health issues, for example, violent and unsafe behaviour, and can often result in vomiting, collapse and seizures which can be potentially life threatening.

Heavy and prolonged drinking can lead to a wide range of health problems, including certain cancers, liver disease, stroke, high blood pressure and can affect mental health.

A unit of alcohol is 8g or 10ml of pure alcohol, which is about:

- half a pint of lower to normal-strength lager/beer/cider (ABV 3.6%)
- a single small shot measure (25ml) of spirits (25ml, ABV 40%)
- A small glass of wine (125ml, ABV 12%) contains around 1.5 units of alcohol.

## **Drinks and units**

A 750ml bottle of red, white or rosé wine (ABV 13.5%) contains 10 units.

<b>Type of drink</b>	<b>Number of alcohol units</b>
Single small shot of spirits * (25ml, ABV 40%)	1 unit
'Alcopop' (275ml, ABV 5.5%)	1.5 units
Small glass of red/white/rosé wine (125ml, ABV 12%)	1.5 units
Bottle of lager/beer/cider (330ml, ABV 5%)	1.7 units
Can of lager/beer/cider (440ml, ABV 5.5%)	2 units
Pint of lower-strength lager/beer/cider (ABV 3.6%)	2 units
Standard glass of red/white/rosé wine (175ml, ABV 12%)	2.1 units
Pint of higher-strength lager/beer/cider (ABV 5.2%)	3 units
Large glass of red/white/rosé wine (250ml, ABV 12%)	3 units

### **How many calories are there in alcohol?**

Be aware that alcohol is high in calories and so can contribute to weight gain. One gram provides seven calories (7kcal), compared with 4kcal per gram for carbohydrate and protein.

One unit contains eight grams or 10ml of alcohol, which provides 56kcal. However, other ingredients such as sugar, cream and fruit juice, can add more calories. Many people forget to include drinks when they are watching or recalling what they eat. It's easy for these 'liquid calories' to add up quickly and unnoticed. Also, alcohol is also an appetite stimulant and can lead to overeating at mealtimes, late at night and even the next day.

### **Low-risk drinking advice**

To keep your risk of alcohol-related harm low:

- men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week on a regular basis
- if you drink as much as 14 units a week, it's best to spread this evenly over 3 or more days
- if you're trying to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink, it's a good idea to have several alcohol-free days each week

- if you're pregnant or trying to become pregnant, the safest approach is to not drink alcohol at all to keep risks to your baby to a minimum

The above information has been sourced and compiled from these websites and resources:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/alcohol-facts.html>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/uploads/assets/5edd618d-0063-4cd4-92e4c82600bdeee1/alcohol-food-fact.pdf>