
Tips for cutting down

- *Set a limit and stick to it*
- *Try non—alcoholic drinks*
- *Go to the pub later than usual*
- *Have some alcohol free days*
- *Keep a drink diary*
- *Remember, It's ok to say no*
- *Pace your drinks—sip slowly, choose smaller measures, add ice / mixers. Try shandy's*
- *Get out of the habit of drinking to relieve boredom or stress*
- *Enjoy not having a hangover*
- *Always eat something before drinking*
- *Beware of home measures, they're usually larger than those in a pub*
- *Buy yourself something special with the money you save from drinking less*

What difference will it make? You might be surprised!

- **More energy**
- **Feel more in control**
- **Better sleep**
- **More money**
- **Better sex life**
- **Lower risk of developing alcohol related problems**
- **Clearer head and better concentration**
- **Less hangovers**
- **Less arguments**
- **Weight loss**
- **Less likely to have or be involved in an accident**

Remember, Less is More

Free to photocopy, please leave our details
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Thinking of Cutting Down?

It's all too easy to slip into the habit of drinking above reasonably healthy limits. But, with a bit of concentration and effort, it's possible to cut down and feel the benefits!



The information and tips in this leaflet may not be suitable for persons dependent on alcohol

Thinking about cutting down?

If you find yourself reading this leaflet, then you're probably thinking about how much and how often you drink alcohol. Alcohol is commonly used by people when out socialising. However, it is a mood altering chemical which if used in excess can have harmful consequences for the drinker and also for people around them. For detailed information on the effects of alcohol, have a look at 'alcohol and the body' information pack.

How much is too much?

Alcohol is often measured in units. As a rough guide:

A pint of ordinary strength beer or lager = 2 units

A standard wine glass = 1 unit

A pub measure of spirits = 1—1.5 units

Alcopops = 1.5 units

You're less likely to experience alcohol related problems if you as a man, drink under 21 units *spread over a week* or as a woman, drink less than 14 units *spread over a week*. This is an upper limit, not a target!!

Its very simple really, the more a person drinks, the more problems they will have. These problems include physical, psychological, emotional, social and work difficulties.

If you are planning to get pregnant, remember that alcohol affects both a man's and a woman's fertility and affects a developing baby.

If you're not sure if you're drinking too much, talk to your doctor or local alcohol service. Alternatively why not do some surfing
www.irishhealth.com

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

What Kind of drinker are YOU?

"I nearly always drink less than the recommended limits"

Well done! It's unlikely that alcohol is causing you problems. This kind of drinking is called social drinking. Once you keep an eye on your drinking you should be safe enough. Remember though, if you're on medication e.g. pain killers, antibiotics, anti depressants etc, even this level of alcohol can interfere with how they work. If in doubt, ask your doctor.

"I regularly drink more than the recommended limits"

Oops! Watch out. Drinking more than these limits is harmful to your health. This kind of drinking is called regular heavy drinking. You're right to consider cutting down on your intake. Blackouts (not remembering things that happen when you're drinking) are a definite sign of drinking too much

"I only drink at weekends / special occasions"

This is a difficult one! For example, when does your weekend start? On Thursday? Alternatively, if you cram all your drinking into one or two days you could have what's called a binge drinking habit. It depends on the amount of alcohol you drink. More than 1/2 the recommended units of alcohol on one occasion is considered a binge. This type of pattern is particularly damaging to your health.

"I know I drink too much but I can't manage to cut down"

This pattern of drinking is definitely dangerous to your health. You may have developed dependence on alcohol. If this is the case, consult your doctor or local alcohol service.

If you're unsure how much you drink, keep a drinking diary for a couple of weeks, like the one below. If you're overdoing it a bit, it's easy to make a plan to cut down.

Drinking Diary

Day	Number and types of drinks	Location	Units
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			

Total cost

Total units of alcohol

5 part plan for cutting down (example)

- I will keep a drinking diary
- I will not drink every day
- I will drink no more than 5 units at any one sitting
- I will drink no more than 12 units spread over the week
- If I stick to my plan I will treat myself to something I never seem to have enough cash for, such as, a meal out in a restaurant

If you find you've more free time
Why not try some alternatives?

Walking
Swimming
Meet friends in a café instead of the pub
Bowling
Cinema
Take a class
Join a club