

Tips to help cut down

- Keep a drink diary – how much you drank and when and how you felt afterwards
- Take part in alcohol-free activities that you enjoy: going to the gym, dancing, walking etc
- Think about your triggers to drink – could it be financial worries, health concerns, loneliness or boredom? Could you talk to others about your worries and concerns, to find a way to reduce the burden of worries you're carrying?
- Avoid people and places that you associate with drinking
- Don't have drink in your home
- Avoid drinking alcohol if you're feeling ill, depressed, bored, anxious or lonely
- Keep within low-risk weekly limits

Reviewing your drinking

Sometimes it's worth taking some time out to think about how we drink.

You might find you're happy with how you drink and might not want to change. You might think your drinking is OK but still would like to experience the health and physical benefits of cutting down. Or you might find yourself uncomfortable when you think about your drinking, for example, your how you act, mood changes, coping with the "comedown" afterwards or lying/deliberately underestimating your drinking if asked about it.

If you are uncomfortable with your drinking then talk to your GP. S/he will be able to offer you information and advice, and refer you to the support or service best suited to your needs. Talk to family and friends who you think could be of help.

The Alcohol Action Ireland Service Finder will provide you with a list of alcohol supports and services in your area.

Go to www.alcoholireland.ie for more information.



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ireland

the national charity for alcohol-related issues

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WOMEN & ALCOHOL: MAKING THE DRINK LINK



Your health and alcohol

For many of us alcohol is something we enjoy – we use it to unwind, to mix with friends and to celebrate. If you do choose to drink, there are a few key facts that as women we need to be particularly aware of:

- Women have lower body weights, less body water and higher percentages of body fat than men – it takes less alcohol for us to feel its effects and alcohol stays in our bodies longer
- Alcohol can have a greater effect on us at particular times, for example, if you're premenstrual – it can aggravate the symptoms of PMS
- Drinking during pregnancy can lead to babies developing physical and intellectual disabilities also known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- If you're on medication for, or are coping with, depression and/ or anxiety – alcohol is a depressant and can cause you to feel more depressed and/or anxious

- Heavy drinking can result in unprotected and/or unwanted sex
- Alcohol is a high calorie substance, for example, there are around 600 calories in a bottle of wine, which is the calorie equivalent of two bars of chocolate or a regular burger and fries
- Drinking one standard alcoholic drink a day is associated with a 9% increase in the risk of developing breast cancer, while 3 to 6 drinks a day increases the risk by 41%



Some benefits to cutting down

- Better able to manage your weight
- Healthier skin – alcohol dehydrates the skin, dilates small blood vessels and can make it look red and blotchy
- Better sleep
- More energy
- More money
- Improved mental health
- Lower risk of breast and other cancers
- Lower risk of stroke and heart disease

How much is too much?

The guidelines for low-risk drinking are up to 14 units a week for a woman, spread over the course of a week with 2/3 days alcohol free.

