

# Tool kit ideas

## What might work for you?

### NHS choices offer on line

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Toolslibrary.aspx?Tag=Alcohol>



### **Drinks tracker for iPhone**

If you have an iPhone or [iPod](#) touch you can download the free NHS Drinks Tracker from the app store straight from your phone. It allows you to keep a drink diary and get feedback on your drinking.

### **Drinking self-assessment**

Are you concerned you might be drinking too much? Answer these questions and find out what kind of relationship you have with alcohol and how you can cut down.

### **Download an alcohol tracker for your PC**

Use the alcohol tracker to calculate alcohol units and keep a drinks diary on your desktop. You can also get feedback on drinking to see if you're drinking within recommended levels

# Alcohol self-assessment

## Are you drinking too much?

If you're worried about the amount you are drinking, take this short test.

It'll help you to assess the effects of your drinking and if it suggests you're drinking too much, you'll get advice on how to cut down or seek further help.

### QUESTIONS

1. In a typical month, how often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Once a month or less (1 points)
- c) 2 to 4 times a month (2 points)
- d) 2 to 3 times a week (3 points)
- e) 4 or more times a week (4 points)

2. How many units of alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

- 1-2 (0 points)
- 3-4 (1 point)
- 5-6 (2 points)
- 7-8 (3 points)
- 9+ (4 points)

### What is a unit?

You can't just count each drink as a unit of alcohol. The number of units depends on the different strength and size of each drink, so it can vary a lot.

Here are some examples:

- Pint of beer, 4%, is 2.3 units
- 500ml can of strong lager, 6%, 3 units
- 250ml glass of wine, 11%, 2.8 units
- 330ml can of cider, 5%, 1.7 units
- Single (25ml) measure of spirits (e.g. vodka or [gin](#)), 1 unit

3. How often do you have six or more units on one occasion?

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Less than monthly (1 points)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily or almost daily (4 points)

What's binge drinking?

Binge drinking usually refers to drinking lots of alcohol in a short space of time or drinking to get drunk.

There is no consistently agreed measure of binge drinking but drinking more than eight units on any day for men, and more than six units for women, is the measure normally used.

The vital thing is to avoid drinking heavily in one session or drinking to intoxication. Binge drinking is a major factor in accidents, violence and anti-social behaviour.

**4. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of your drinking?**

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Less than monthly (1 points)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily or almost daily (4 points)

**5. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to [stop drinking](#) once you had started?**

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Less than monthly (1 points)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily or almost daily (4 points)

**6. How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?**

- a) Never (0 points)

- b) Less than monthly (1 point)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily or almost daily (4 points)

**7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?**

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Less than monthly (1 point)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily or almost daily (4 points)

**8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?**

- a) Never (0 points)
- b) Less than monthly (1 point)
- c) Monthly (2 points)
- d) Weekly (3 points)
- e) Daily (4 points)

**9. Have you or somebody else been injured as a result of your drinking?**

- a) No, this has never happened (0 points)
- b) Yes, but not in the past year (2 points)
- c) Yes, during the past year (4 points)

**10. Has a relative, friend, doctor or health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?**

- a) No, never (0 points)
- b) Yes, but not in the past year (2 points)
- c) Yes, during the past year (4 points)

# RESULTS

## 0-8 points

Based on your answers today you're drinking in a way that is sociable and is unlikely to harm your health.

As long as your drinking does remain within recommended levels, you are considered a 'lower-risk' drinker as there is only a low risk that the way you drink will contribute to future health problems.

The NHS recommends that women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day and men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day.

Drinking consistently within these limits is called 'lower-risk' rather than 'safe' because drinking alcohol is never completely safe.

Remember, there can be risks from one-off episodes of heavy drinking too.

## 8-20 points

Based on your answers today you are drinking at harmful levels.

The NHS recommends that women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day and men should not regularly drink more than 3-4. If you drink every day, it's recommended that you have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

Alcohol affects all parts and systems of the body and if you are regularly drinking above the guidelines, your risk of developing a serious illness is higher than non-drinkers. This includes cancer of the mouth, neck and throat, breast cancer in women, liver cirrhosis and high blood pressure.

At these levels of drinking, you may already have alcohol-related problems, such as fatigue or depression, weight gain, poor sleep and sexual problems. You're probably in worse physical shape than you would be otherwise. Also, you could easily have higher blood pressure due to your drinking.

Some people argue a lot when they drink, which can negatively affect their relationships with family and friends.

The following can help you cut down:

- Work out a daily limit and stick to it.
- Do more activities that don't involve drinking.
- Eat before and while you're drinking.
- Don't let anyone top up your drinks.
- Tell your friends you're cutting down.

Count your units.

## 20-100 points

Based on your answers today you are drinking at harmful levels and your drinking is already causing you problems.

The NHS recommends that women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day and men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day. If you drink every day, it's recommended that you have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

You have a much higher risk of developing alcohol-related health problems. Your body has probably suffered some damage already, even if you're not yet aware of it.

Compared to non-drinkers, if you regularly drink above higher-risk levels you could be:

- 3 to 5 times more likely to get cancer of the mouth, neck and throat.
- 3 to 10 times more likely to develop liver cirrhosis
- Twice as likely to have an irregular heartbeat
- At four times the risk of having high blood pressure as a man, and women are at least twice as likely to develop it
- As a woman - around 1.5 times as likely to get breast cancer

At these levels of drinking, you may already have alcohol-related problems, such as fatigue or depression, weight gain, poor sleep and sexual problems. You're probably in worse physical shape than you would be otherwise. Also, you could easily have higher blood pressure due to your drinking.

Some people argue a lot when they drink, which can negatively affect their relationships with family and friends.

If you want help to reduce your drinking, you can find local alcohol services in 'Useful Links' or your GP will be able to help you find them. You can also contact the National Drinkline 0800 917 8282 open 24 hours, seven days a week.

From NHS Choices 2013

## **Think about your drinking:**

From:

[http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/assets/files/Training%20and%20Consultancy/Alcohol and Young People Toolkit%281%29.pdf](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/assets/files/Training%20and%20Consultancy/Alcohol%20and%20Young%20People%20Toolkit%281%29.pdf)

### **Start by completing this table**

<b>The Good Things About My Drinking</b>	<b>The Bad Things About My Drinking</b>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	

# Continue to think about your drinking by completing this chart:

If you think that changing your drinking pattern would make you feel happier about yourself and your lifestyle, then ask yourself:

## DO I WANT TO CHANGE THE WAY I DRINK?

IF I CHANGE	IF I DO NOT CHANGE
In 3 months I will be...	In 3 months I will be...
In 6 months I will be...	In 6 months I will be...
In 12 months I will be...	In 12 months I will be...
In 5 years I will be...	In 5 years I will be...

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## Reasons for drinking...

Reason for drinking Tick if it applies to you	Other ways I might achieve this
To relax	
To give confidence	
Because friends do	
To help sleep	
For company	
Boredom	
I like the taste	
Because I'm angry	
To cope with worries	
To celebrate	

# How can we make your drinking less harmful...

Plan how you will change your drinking by completing this table:

I Can Cut Down My Drinking By...	This is Easy Because...	This is Difficult Because...
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

## Think about times you might slip up

Times I might slip up	How I can prevent this/my way of coping
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

# GOALS AND REWARDS

My drinking goal this week is: ..... Units

I will avoid the following situations this week:

Instead I will try to do the following, which will enable me to maintain a lower level of drinking:

What else I will change this week:

How will I reward myself when I succeed?

Signed .....

Date .....