

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team (DALT)

Alcohol – advice and information

Why have I been given this leaflet?

We screen most adult inpatients for their use of alcohol and substances. This does not mean you have a problem, but information and advice can help make a difference and prevent future problems.

Everyone who drinks over 14 units a week would benefit from reducing their alcohol intake.

At Sherwood Forest Hospitals we want to support our patients and community to reduce their alcohol intake and improve their health. The aim of this leaflet is to:

- Increase your understanding of how drinking too much alcohol affects your health.
- Give practical guidance and tips to safely cut down how much alcohol you drink.

Please take the time to read through this leaflet. Contact our specialist Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team (DALT) if you have any questions or would like further support to reduce your drinking. They can come and speak to you whilst you are an inpatient (just ask a member of staff to make a referral), or you can contact them on 01623 622515, extension 3935.

Understanding my alcohol intake

Alcohol is measured in units to help you understand how much you are drinking. Different drinks and servings contain different numbers of units.

There is no completely safe level of drinking. If you do drink alcohol, it is recommended that you drink no more than 14 units per week spread across three days or more. Drinking more than 6 units in one sitting is considered binge-drinking.

One unit of alcohol is:

- Half a pint of 3-4% beer/cider/lager.
- 125ml (very small glass) of average strength wine (12%).
- A single measure (25 cl) of a 40% spirit.

Here are some examples:

- A pint of 5% ABV beer/lager = 3 units.
- A bottle of 12% ABV wine = 9 units.
- A double gin and tonic = 2 units.

To work out how many units of alcohol (and calories) are in your drinks, you can go to the Alcohol Change UK calculator.



Scan the QR code with your mobile phone, or type this link into your browser:

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/unit-calculator>

If you are pregnant or think you could become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to your baby to a minimum. Drinking in pregnancy can lead to long term harm to the baby, with the more you drink the greater the risk.

What are the health risks if I drink more than 14 units per week?

Regular, excessive consumption of alcohol can lead to a number of health problems including:

- High blood pressure.
- Weight gain.
- Insomnia.
- Cancers of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, breast, stomach, bowel, liver.
- Stroke.
- Heart disease.
- Liver cirrhosis.
- Pancreatitis.
- Depression.
- Memory problems.

How to drink less alcohol

Any reduction in the amount of alcohol you drink will benefit your health. It can boost your energy, help you lose weight, sleep better, and save you money.

Warning: If you drink every day, you may be alcohol dependent. If you are drinking daily and become unwell whilst trying to reduce or stop, you need to seek medical advice; see your GP, phone NHS 111 or contact our Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team via the hospital switchboard or on 01623 622515, extension 3935.

Some useful tips:

- **Track your consumption.** Keep a diary or use apps or trackers to monitor units. The Drinkaware app is free and can track units, calories, money spent, etc.

www.drinkaware.co.uk/tools/mydrinkaware-app



- **Aim to cut down and set limits**, for example:
 - Decide how much you are going to spend/drink on a night out, how many alcohol-free days you're going to have per week, etc.
 - Switch from stronger stuff. Choose drinks that are lower in alcohol, for example lighter beers, lower percentage wines, etc.
 - Pace yourself. Drink at your own pace and don't feel pressurised by others. Avoid rounds, keep hydrated by having a glass of water or a soft drink between alcoholic drinks, try bottles of beer or halves instead of pints and choose a smaller glass for wine.

- Eat before drinking. Food can slow the absorption of alcohol, stopping it going to your head too quickly and helping to protect your stomach lining.
- Avoid drinking before going out.
- **Make lifestyle changes:**
 - Avoid environments that encourage heavy drinking.
 - Find other ways to have fun/relax/cope with stress etc. Meet friends for breakfast or a coffee instead of going to the pub or go bowling or to the cinema instead. Exercise is good for relieving stress and making you feel good.
- **Seek support.** From family, friends, and specialist services.
- **Reward yourself.** Changing drinking habits usually requires some willpower and self-control so you should be pleased with yourself for succeeding. Buy yourself something special with the money you save from not drinking or drinking less.

Further advice, support, and useful tools:

- **Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team (DALT) at King's Mill Hospital**
Telephone 01623 622515 (and ask to be put through to the team) between Monday and Sunday, 8am to 8pm.
- **Drink Aware**
Website: www.drinkaware.co.uk
- **Alcohol Change UK**
Website: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk>



- **Change, Grow, Live (CGL) for community alcohol support for people in Nottinghamshire**
Telephone: 0115 8960798
Website: <https://www.changegrowlive.org>
- **Derbyshire Recovery Partnership (DRP) for community alcohol support for people living in Derbyshire**
Telephone: 01246 206514
Website: www.derbyshirerecoverypartnership.co.uk



Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns, or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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