

Helplines and other organisations:

IMPACT, 48a Walker Street, Wellington, Telford.

Telephone: 01952 223165

Open: 9am - 5pm Monday-Thursday; 9am – 4.30pm Friday

Community Substance Misuse Team

Matthew Webb House, High Street, Dawley, Telford. Tel: 01952 381730

Portico House, 22 Vineyard Road, Wellington. Tel: 01952 381777

Alcoholics Anonymous

Telephone helpline: 0845 769 7555

Various meetings across Telford. Telephone for details or search on www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk.

Al-Anon

Meet each Tuesday at 8pm in the Princess Royal Hospital, Room C of the Education Centre.

Source: The Portman Group

Produced by:-

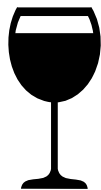
The Health Shop, 31 High Street, Madeley,
Telford, Shropshire. TF7 5AR.

Telephone: 01952 582659

2004

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Women & Drinking



Sensible drinking

There are recommended weekly sensible drinking levels to reduce the risk of harm from drinking alcohol. For women, the recommended limit is up to 14 units of alcohol a week, spread throughout the week (average, with one or two drink-free days). This limit does not apply to pregnant women.

A unit is:

- Half a pint of ordinary beer, lager or cider
- A small glass of wine
- A pub measure of spirits
- A small glass of sherry
- A single measure of aperitif

For men the limit is up to 21 units of alcohol a week. The limits are different because women have less body water and are generally smaller than men, which mean that the alcohol they drink is less diluted in the body. So, drink for drink, women will reach a higher blood alcohol level than men.

Some alcoholic drinks are extra strong – all bottles and cans now carry a % ABV (alcohol by volume) symbol so you can compare the strength. Measures poured at home are usually more generous, so you may be drinking the equivalent of two or three units.

On average, it takes one hour for the body to get rid of one unit of alcohol.

Effects of alcohol

Some women find that alcohol affects them differently a few days before their period.

Alcohol and medicines do not mix – check with your doctor or pharmacist.

When you drink, the alcohol is quickly absorbed into your blood and carried round the body. The health risks from heavy drinking include damage to the liver and brain, stomach disorders, high blood-pressure and strokes. Some cancers, e.g. mouth, throat and liver, are related to heavy drinking.

Drinking affects your co-ordination and judgement and the risks of having an accident after drinking are high.

Alcohol is a depressant and can be linked to mental health problems such as anxiety, tension, depression and paranoia.

The use of alcohol is related to a range of social problems:- arguments, the break-up of relationships and families, work difficulties, money problems, child neglect or abuse, vandalism, public disturbance or violence.

In comparison with men, women absorb alcohol faster, have an increased risk of liver damage (especially young women), suffer brain damage at a lower rate of alcohol consumption and develop alcohol dependency more quickly.

Alcohol contains empty calories, which lead to weight-gain and can stop the body absorbing essential vitamins.

Drink diary

	What	Where/When/Who	Units	Total
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Total for the week:-				

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Monday				
Tuesday				
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Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Total for the week:-				

Pregnancy

Alcohol passes from a mother's bloodstream to the baby through the placenta and can affect the baby's development. It is therefore recommended that women planning to become pregnant should avoid alcohol and refrain from drinking whilst pregnant.

If you breast-feed, small quantities of alcohol will be passed to the baby in your breast milk. This may affect the baby's feeding, bowels or sleeping. If you have had several drinks it is advisable to allow time for your body to get rid of the alcohol.

Older women

Older women have a lower tolerance to alcohol and become drunk more quickly. Women at risk of hypothermia should avoid alcohol, as it reduces body temperature. Alcohol and medicines don't mix. In particular people taking antihistamines, antibiotics or medicines for rheumatism, depression, diabetes and epilepsy should seek advice.

Alcohol & the law

It is an offence to drive with more than 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood (about 4 units) but any amount of alcohol impairs judgement and reaction speeds.

Drinking too much?

Warning signs:-

- Needing to have alcohol at hand
- Getting into trouble because of drinking
- Making drink a top priority
- Having to increase the amount drunk in order to feel the same effect
- Having accidents or injuries because of drinking

Seeking help

Tips on cutting down:- keep one or two drink-free days; choose low alcohol or alcohol-free drinks instead; sip slowly; drink smaller measures; find alternative ways to relax.

Traditional images of women as carers may conflict with the image of women with drink problems and this can make it harder for some women to seek help.

Help is available from a range of sources:- either ask your GP or look in the telephone book under "Alcohol". Alternatively, contact an alcohol help organisation (details at the end of this leaflet).