

SURVIVAL GUIDE TO DRINKING

HOW TO HAVE A GOOD NIGHT OUT
WITHOUT TOO MUCH PAIN THE MORNING AFTER



A good night out can be a great one with a bit of planning. A little preparation means your night won't end in a way you didn't plan.

Eat something before you go out.

It's a good idea to have something to eat before you drink. You'll have more energy. Also, if you do choose to drink, it'll take the alcohol longer to be absorbed into your body which means you'll be more likely to enjoy the whole night. Good food includes pasta, potatoes, rice, and wholemeal or granary bread.

Start later – last longer.

If you know you get drunk quickly, think about starting drinking later in the evening. You'll feel better if you don't start drinking too early.

How will you get home?

You might not be so clear-headed by the end of the night. Do you know the last bus or train times? Have you got enough money to get home? Lots of people keep their fare home separate from their spending money.

Did you know?

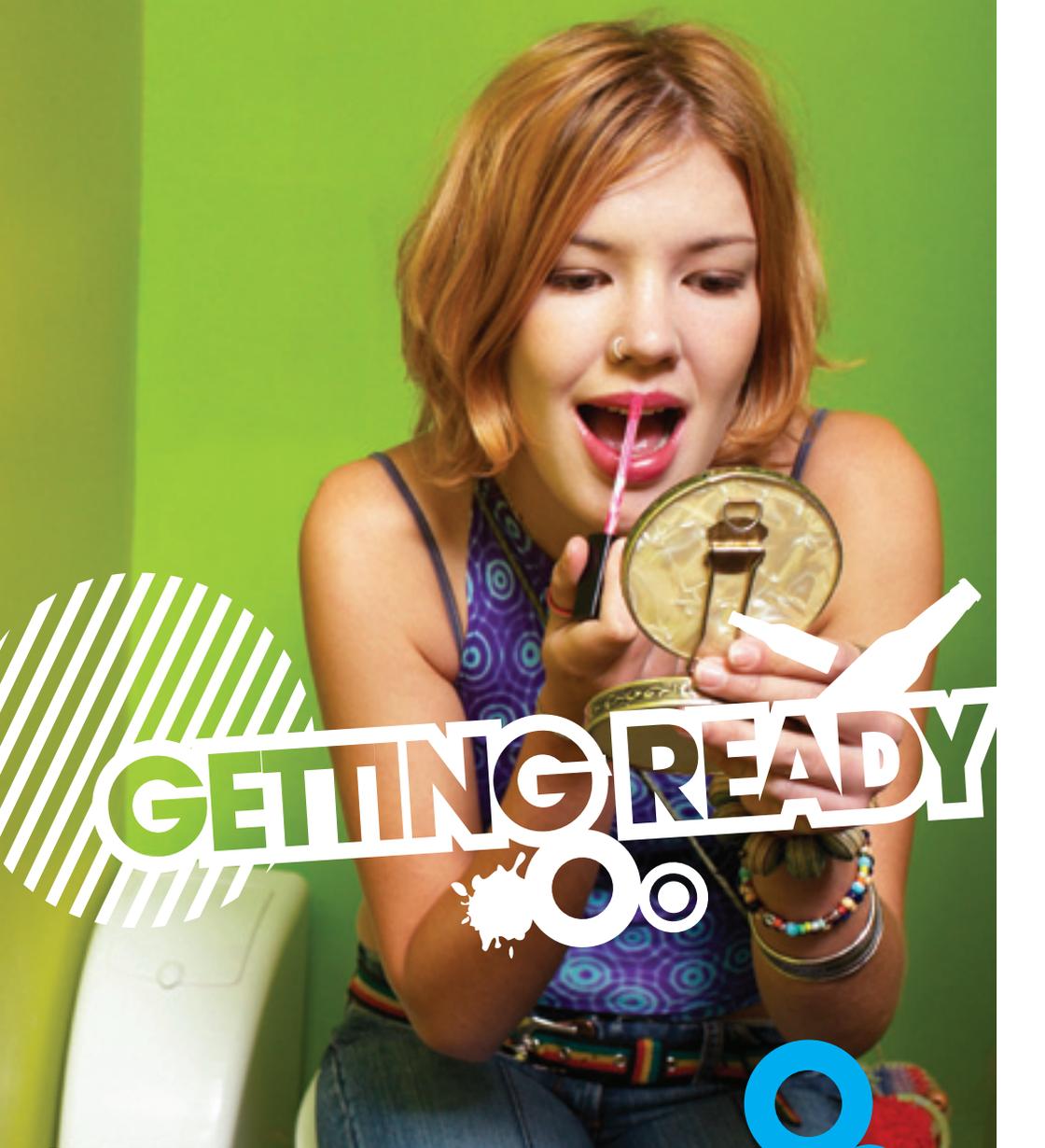
It takes your liver approximately one hour to remove one unit of alcohol from your bloodstream. A unit of alcohol is equivalent to half a pint of normal strength beer or lager (4% abv), a small, single pub measure of spirits (25 ml), or half a small (175 ml) glass of wine (12.5% abv).



DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol has a lot of calories!

Did you know that one pint of lager/beer or one large (250ml) glass of wine has roughly the same number of calories as one chocolate bar or one packet of crisps?



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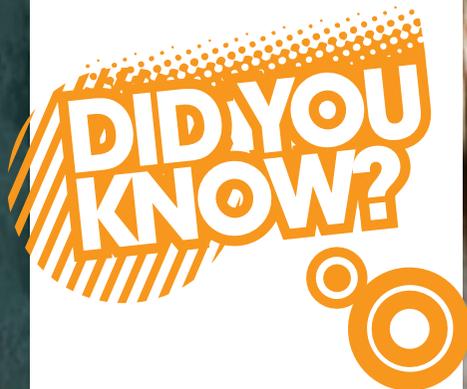


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What happens to alcohol after you drink it?

Alcohol cannot be stored in your body, so it must be broken down by your liver, which converts alcohol into acetic acid (vinegar) and then passes it out in your urine, sweat or breath.



Ever wonder why alcohol can have an effect so quickly?

It's because alcohol is made up of small molecules. They pass through your stomach wall into the bloodstream very quickly.



Drinking alcohol can make you feel great to begin with. The trick is to stay feeling great. **Pace yourself. Enjoy a drink slowly.**

GOING OUT

Get to know your limits. You don't have to keep up with the fastest drinker. If you stick with others who drink at the same rate as you, you can take charge of how quickly you drink and how much you spend.

Drink plenty of alcohol-free drinks or water in between alcoholic drinks. A small glass of water or low calorie soft drink, with ice and lemon, can look just like a short and mixer.

If you think the drink is hitting you too quickly, take a break. Even if it isn't hitting you, take a break – remember that tolerance to alcohol does not protect you from harm.

Different drinks have different colours and flavours. The colours and flavours in wines and spirits are chemical 'impurities' (also called congeners). Because of these, and the way they affect the body, it is true for most people that mixing spirits with beer or wine in an evening's drinking will make them feel much worse the next day so it's a good idea not to mix your drinks. Remember, there are dangers in drinking alcohol while taking prescription drugs so it's best to avoid alcohol during this time.

**Make sure you get home safely
and that your friends do too.**

There's no point in spoiling the fun
by getting into trouble or spending
the night in the cold.

GETTING HOME

Don't leave anyone behind. If your friends have drunk so much that they're being a pain, you'll need to help them to get home safely. Remember, it could have been you! You may need their help one day for something.

If someone passes out:

- don't leave them on their own
- call an ambulance and stay where you are
- help them into the recovery position (see last page)
- keep them warm.

Did you know that, after drinking alcohol, the body cools quickly? People can die if they get too cold.



DID YOU KNOW?

The morning after

Hangovers (due to drinking too much) often cause stomach pain, sickness and even diarrhoea (due to alcohol irritating the stomach), dizziness, and headaches (due to alcohol's dehydrating effect). Hangovers can vary according to how much you drink, what you drink, and how your body processes the alcohol. The darker the drink, the worse the hangover! There are higher concentrations of some chemicals called congeners in dark drinks. These irritate the brain and make you feel worse. There are most congeners in red wine and whisky.

However, by following the tips in this booklet, hopefully a hangover is something which you won't have to suffer from.

Stay hydrated

Alcohol is a diuretic and makes you urinate which dries out (dehydrates) your body. Drink plenty of water during and after drinking alcohol to counter the dehydrating effects of alcohol.

There are effects from drinking too much in one episode. There are also effects which build up through drinking too much over time. Tolerance does not protect from harm; alcohol-related health problems can be caused by drinking heavily over time or by frequent episodes of heavy drinking. Immediate effects of too much alcohol use (for example, through an episode of heavy drinking) can include or lead to:

insomnia

hangovers (including tiredness, inability to concentrate, mood control problems)

dizziness

damaging property

becoming argumentative or aggressive, or getting into fights

accidents and injuries

falling over

unplanned pregnancy

being sick

contracting a sexually transmitted infection through unprotected sex

problems getting or maintaining an erection

anxiety

coma and even death, for example, through alcohol poisoning or inhaling vomit when unconscious

depression

suicide or attempted suicide

Weight gain (due to alcohol's high calorie content), skin problems, sexual dysfunction and fertility problems are some other side effects which frequent episodes of heavy drinking can cause. Longer term, a whole range of physical and mental health problems, and/or family and work problems, can result from prolonged use of alcohol.



Hopefully, by following the advice in this booklet, you'll not be facing a hangover and you'll be able to have the next day to enjoy and do as you please rather than suffer in bed. **However, it's best to prepare yourself just in case – it can't do any harm.**

COMING ROUND

Before you go to bed

Drink plenty of water and keep some beside the bed.

Next day

Hopefully you'll be feeling fit and healthy, but if not, here are some tips on how to cope:

- Keep drinking fluids – water is best – to hydrate you and to help flush out the colourings and flavourings (impurities) from the alcohol.
- Drinking can also make you feel down as it is a depressant. Tea or coffee may cheer you up temporarily, but could also dehydrate you further, so it's best to drink more water.

- If you can, take a walk in the fresh air.

Drinking also lowers your blood sugar level

You need food too. As soon as you can face it, eat something – wholegrain cereal or porridge and semi-skimmed milk; fruit (bananas and citrus fruits are good) with low fat yoghurt; or egg on wholemeal or granary toast will all help put back the vitamins and minerals you lose when you drink alcohol.



COUNTING UNITS



The basic rule is:

One pint of normal strength beer/lager/cider (4% abv) (568 ml)

= **2.2 units of alcohol**



One bottle of ready mixed drink (alcopops) (5% abv) (275 ml)

= **1.4 units of alcohol**



One standard (small) glass of wine (12.5% abv) (175 ml)

= **2.2 units of alcohol**



One standard measure of spirits (40% abv) (25 ml)

= **1 unit of alcohol**

One unit = 10 ml of pure alcohol.

Counting drinks in units of alcohol is a quick and easy way of checking how much you are drinking.

If you are drinking bottled drinks or cans, and they don't have the number of units on their label, you can work these out for yourself by using this simple method:

1. multiply the % alcohol content by the volume
2. divide by 100 if volume is stated in centilitres (cls), or
3. divide by 1000 if volume is stated in millilitres (mls).

The result is the number of units of alcohol in a drink, for example, a 70cl bottle of vodka at 40%; $40 \times 70 \div 100 = 28$ units.

The drinking guidelines for those over 18 years of age in Scotland are:

Men

No more than **3–4 units in a day.**

Women

No more than **2–3 units in a day.** Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive should avoid drinking alcohol.

Everyone

Should have at least **two alcohol-free days a week.**

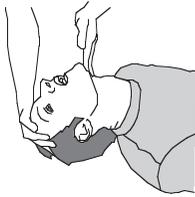
There are currently no drinking guidelines for people under the age of 18.

If someone you know seems seriously ill or is very drowsy or unconscious, you need expert help at once: **Call 999**

FIRST AID

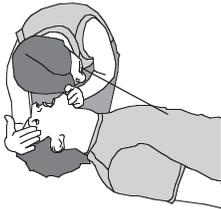
1. Airway

Open the airway by placing one hand on the forehead and gently tilting the head back, using the other hand to lift the chin.



2. Breathing normally

Look, listen and feel for signs of normal breathing.



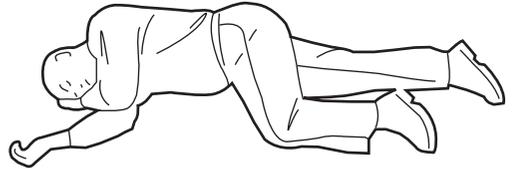
3. If they are breathing:

- place or help them into the recovery position
- call 999 for an ambulance, or get someone else to do it if possible, and stay with them
- keep them warm.

It is important not to panic. Tell the emergency services clearly what symptoms they have and what alcohol or drugs they've had, if you know.

The recovery position

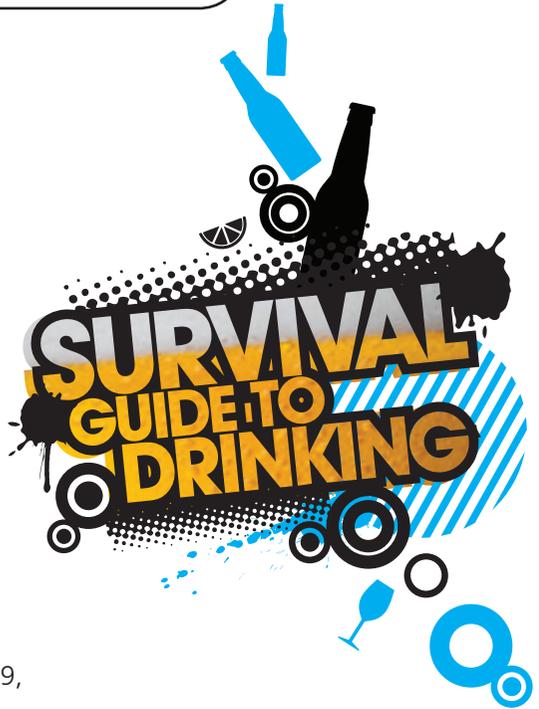
An unconscious person who is breathing but has no other life-threatening conditions should be placed in the recovery position.



Remove bulky items only (e.g. mobile phone) from their pockets. Turn them on to their side by placing the arm that is nearest to you at right angles to their body. Then bring the arm that is furthest from you across their chest and place their hand under their cheek. Finally, pull on their far leg, rolling them towards you. Tilt the head back and lift the chin to open the airway. Check that they cannot roll forwards or backwards.

If injuries allow, turn them on to their other side after 30 minutes.

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