



**TEMPLATE WEBSITE
TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BY
HEALTHY ADULT CONSUMERS**

**Developed by AIM
on request of The European Spirits Producers Association & EFRD**

Contact at AIM – Alcohol in Moderation

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Home page

A majority of adults in Europe enjoy drinking and find it both relaxing and sociable.

However, there are times when drinking too much, or at all, can be harmful or dangerous, such as when pregnant, on certain medications or when driving. Safer drinking is knowing where the benefits end and the risks begin.

This website answers some of the most commonly asked questions about alcohol such as how much is too much?, what is safer drinking? and how alcohol affects your body.. There are [top tips](#) and party survival guides for young adults, guidelines for [parents](#) and advise for those [under eighteen](#).

Button 1: Alcohol and You

1.1 What is a “standard drink”?

A standard drink measures the amount of alcohol, not the amount of liquid you’re drinking – because it’s the alcohol content that is most important to track.

Similar products in containers of the same size may hold different numbers of standard drinks.

✂ Recommendation:

Illustrate with a table of national “drinks”/standard serve size and number of national standards drinks or grams contained. Where a standard drink size does not exist, use 10g.

1.2 What is low risk drinking?

Governments of many countries have guidelines for ‘safe’ or ‘low-risk’ drinking for adults, set at a level at which there is little health risk for most people. It should be noted however that individuals do differ in terms of what level will cause harm. Therefore, despite the guidelines, what is most important is for you “to know your limits”.

✂ Recommendation

- ▶ National responsible drinking guidelines to be inserted here, if they exist
- ▶ View examples via:
 - <http://www.drinkingandyou.com/site/uk/moder.htm>;
 - <http://www.drinkaware.ie/howmany.php>
 - <http://units.nhs.uk/>

Where national guidelines do not exist, substitute with International “low risk drinking” recommendations by the World Health Organisation.

WHO low-risk drinking definition is:

- (2) Women do not drink more than two drinks a day on average
- (3) For men, not more than three drinks a day on average
- (4) Try not to exceed four drinks on any one occasion
- (0) Not to drink alcohol in some situations, such as when driving, if pregnant or in certain work situations and to abstain from drinking at least once a week.

Men or women who consistently drink more than these recommended levels may increase risks to their health.

✂ Recommendation

- ▶ You can access the WHO guide at www.mentalneurologicalprimarycare.org
- ▶ Based on WHO Guidelines, a website in France called www.2340.fr has been launched

1.3 What does low risk drinking mean?

Low risk drinking means drinking enjoyably, sociably and sensibly.

As a [parent \(link to section 3.4\)](#), it means being aware of the risks to young people of drinking and setting an example of moderation.

When you do drink, make sure you consume plenty of water or non-alcoholic beverages between alcoholic drinks and eat either before or while drinking. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that responsible drinkers spread the number of units they drink throughout the week, with two alcohol free days. Remember, if you regularly drink more than these [responsible drinking guidelines \(link to 1.2 \)](#), [health risks \(link to 1.6\)](#) start to accumulate.

How and when you drink is equally as important. Drinking on an empty stomach or drinking fast, results in higher blood alcohol levels and these will also be affected by your size weight, health and age. Being very tired, ill or stressed may affect a person's reaction to alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant and places stress on the body systems which may result in you being affected more by alcohol when tired or run down.

✂ Recommendation

If possible, insert a "drink calculator" for visitors to work out the amount of alcohol in their favourite drinks

Good examples can be viewed at:

<http://www.heineken.com/global/ehr/index.aspx?data=data&lngs=../cc/ehr/lngs&pg=guidelines>

http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/index.php?option=com_drinkscalc&gender=f&Itemid=45

<http://units.nhs.uk/>

1.4 Who do the guidelines apply to?

Moderation guidelines are set for an average healthy adult and therefore do not apply to young people who have not reached physical maturity, people with conditions which may be affected by alcohol such as [pregnant women \(link to 3.3\)](#) or those with untreated high blood pressure, or those taking [medications \(link to 3.6.2\)](#) that do not combine well with alcohol.

Those with a history of addiction or mental illness should abstain or consult their doctor for advice.

Young people can't cope with alcohol physically or emotionally as well as adults. That's why there are no safe limits for this age group, and laws exist to restrict purchase and consumption of [alcohol by young people](#) ([link to 3.1](#))

1.5 When not to drink?

Sometimes it makes sense not to drink at all. Even a small amount of alcohol affects your judgement, reactions and co-ordination. Most people who enjoy drinking find it a sociable and relaxing thing to do.. However, there are times when drinking too much - or even at all can cause problems or harm.

- ▶ Do not drink and drive([link to button 4](#))
- ▶ Don't operate machinery, use electrical equipment or work at heights after drinking
- ▶ Don't drink heavily before playing [sport](#) ([link to 3.2.4](#))
- ▶ Don't drink while on certain medications - ask your Doctor if you are unsure ([link to 3.6.3](#))
- ▶ Don't drink to drunkenness or 'binge' - it can lead to health and social problems ([link to button 2](#))
- ▶ Don't drink when [pregnant](#) ([link to 3.3](#))

1.6 How much is too much?

Regularly exceeding responsible drinking guidelines or regularly [drinking to get drunk](#) ([link to 2.3.2](#)) can lead to both short term and long term harm.

Government guidelines suggest that adult men and women don't drink over a certain amount of alcohol a day, but this doesn't mean someone can 'save up' their drinks for one [big night out](#) ([link to 5.1](#)). Drinking a lot in one session can be harmful because the human body can't process a lot of alcohol at once ([link to 3.2.3](#))

1.7 The downside of drinking too much

Short term increased risks due to getting very drunk include:

- ▶ not getting home safely
- ▶ risky or unprotected sex which could result in sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies
- ▶ Fights and arguments which could result in trouble with the police and getting a criminal record

- ▶ being a victim of crime
- ▶ Injuries and accidents
- ▶ vomiting, passing out or even [alcoholic poisoning](#)

When you "[binge drink](#)" ([link 2.3.3](#)), you increase your blood pressure and the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. If you do overdo it, [click here for some tips](#) ([link to 5.5](#))

Long term Heavy Drinking

There's no two ways about it - heavy drinking, especially on a regular basis, can lead to serious health or social problems, including:

- ▶ Alcohol dependence or alcoholism
- ▶ Sexual difficulties, including impotence (alcohol tends to 'increase the desire to minimise the performance')
- ▶ Cirrhosis of the liver and alcoholic fatty liver
- ▶ Pancreatitis
- ▶ Stomach disorders, such as ulcers
- ▶ Mood changes
- ▶ In extreme cases, alcoholic poisoning, coma, brain damage and death
- ▶ An increased risk of certain types of cancer, especially of the mouth, upper respiratory system and breast cancer.
- ▶ An increased risk of getting into financial difficulty, perhaps losing your job or home.
- ▶ Risks to the family, whereby children of dependent drinkers are more likely to develop alcohol related problems themselves and the family unit is more likely to break down.

It is important to remember that 'the majority of people who drink alcohol, drink sensibly the majority of the time'. Also, more than half the worlds' adult population choose not to drink alcohol for religious, cultural or health reasons.

1.8 Are there any health benefits to moderate drinking?

With moderate drinking, ([link to 2..4.6](#)) the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and the risk of death from cardiovascular disease as well as all causes, may be reduced by up to 30%, especially for men over 40 and post menopausal women for whom the risk factors for heart disease and strokes are highest. The risk increases exceptionally, however, with each drink above moderation. Drinking more than the [guidelines](#) ([link to 1.3](#)) will not provide more benefits, only more harms.

Statistically there are no health benefits for younger age groups who, for example, are at greater risk from alcohol related violence and accidents.

It is not recommended that anyone should start drinking for health reasons.

Alcohol, may protect against cardiovascular disease because, in simple terms it “thins the blood” and so helps reduce the risk of harmful clots and clogging of the arteries. Small amounts of alcohol also stimulate the liver to produce ‘good’ cholesterol (HDL) which in turn carries off the harmful cholesterol (LDL) for disposal.

The message is little and often however as just one standard drink is enough and the positive effect lasts for approximately 24 hours.

Several studies have confirmed that for [middle-aged and older adults \(link to 3.6\)](#) very moderate drinking can confer health benefits, such as lowered risk of dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, osteoporosis and [Type 2 diabetes \(link to 2.5.5\)](#). Drinking more than ‘moderately’ can cause raised blood pressure and can interfere with good diabetes control thus increasing the risk of both stroke and heart attacks.

1.9 Check your drinking

Find out in seconds if you should cut down on or seek help for your drinking. The quick and easy to use test¹ was developed by the World Health Organisation as a simple method of screening for excessive drinking.

✂ Recommendation

Insert an interactive questionnaire to place the question / read the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test to attribute appropriate rating to the answers.

1. How often do you have a standard drink?

Never	0
Monthly or less	1
2 to 4 times a month	2
2 to 3 times a week	3
4 or more	4

2. How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

1 or 2	0
3 or 4	1
5 or 6	2

¹ The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. Guidelines for Use in Primary Care. Second Edition. World Health Organisation. Bador T.F., Higgins-Biddle J.C., Saunders J.B., Monteiro M.G. (2001): http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_MSD_MSB_01.6a.pdf

	7, 8, or 9	3
	10 or more	4
3.	How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4
4.	How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4
5.	How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4
6.	How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4
7.	How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4
8.	How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?	
	Never	0
	Less than monthly	1
	Monthly	2
	Weekly	3
	Daily or almost daily	4

9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| No | 0 |
| Yes, but not in the last year | 2 |
| Yes, during the last year | 4 |
10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| No | 0 |
| Yes, but not in the last year | 2 |
| Yes, during the last year | 4 |

(Those who indicate on the test that they are aged 18-64)

It is recommended that those who obtain a score of 8 or more on the test should seek advice from their GP. Your score was ___

(Those who indicate on the test that they are aged 65 and over):

It is recommended that those who obtain a score of 7 or more on the test should seek advice from their GP. Your score was ___

1.10 For further information

Button 2: Alcohol and its effects**Sub- section introduction: What happens to alcohol in your body?**

The alcohol in your drink is absorbed into your body through the stomach and small intestines. Food slows down the rate of absorption - that's why alcohol affects you more quickly when taken on an empty stomach. ([Link to 2.3.2 for more information](#))

Alcohol travels through the intestines to the liver and then on to your heart, brain, muscles and other tissues. This happens very quickly - within a few minutes. Usually, though not always, this has a pleasant effect.

Your body can't store alcohol, so it breaks it down - your liver's job. The liver firstly changes alcohol into acetaldehyde (this is toxic), then into acetate (harmless), which is then broken down into carbon dioxide and water. About 90% - 95% of alcohol consumed is broken down by the liver, 5% - 10% is excreted through urine, breath and sweat.

Your body's ability to process alcohol depends on your age, weight and sex. Your body breaks down alcohol at a rate of roughly one drink per hour - and there's no way [you can speed this up](#) ([link to 2.4.2](#))

2.1 Female Body Zone**✂ Recommendation**

We recommend you use a graphic of the **human female body** which is mouse sensitive, leading you to information on each part of the body
Good examples can be viewed at:

<http://www.talkaboutalcohol.com/YoungPeople/FactZone/FactZoneFlash30.aspx>

<http://www.at-bristol.org.uk/alcoholandyou/effects/body.html#body>

2.1.0 Introduction: Sex matters

[✂ highlight whole body]

Sorry ladies, but you can't drink as much as men. That's not a male conspiracy theory but a biological fact! Women have less body water than men so the concentration of alcohol (BAC) in their blood stream is proportionally higher. So, if a woman weighing 60 kilograms drinks a double gin then a man of the same size will need to drink a triple gin in order to reach the same blood alcohol level.

There is some evidence that women may have smaller amounts of the enzyme ADH (which is responsible for breaking down alcohol in the liver and in the lining of the stomach) and this might contribute to their higher BAC levels.

2.1.1 Hey good looking!

[✖ highlight face]

Too much alcohol dehydrates your body and skin. This is because it blocks the release of anti-diuretic hormones, so the kidneys get rid of too much water.

Too much alcohol dilates the blood vessels under the surface of the skin, leading to ugly veins on the nose and cheeks if you drink heavily.

2.1.2 Vision

[✖ highlight eyes]

Too much alcohol dilates blood vessels in the eyes, so they can look red and 'bloodshot'.

It also affects the signals sent from the eyes to the brain - vision becomes blurred, and distances and speeds get harder to judge.

This is why many [road accidents](#) (link to button 4) involve drivers or pedestrians who have alcohol in their blood.

2.1.3 Blood and guts

[✖ highlight intestines]

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach walls and the intestines as a person drinks. The bloodstream carries the alcohol to the liver, which breaks down the alcohol... with any excess reaching the brain and other organs....a loss of inhibitions is sometimes one of the first effects. As more alcohol is consumed the BAC rises. However the exact time that the body takes to absorb alcohol varies from one person to another.

Excessive alcohol irritates the stomach, so it can lead to nausea, cramps, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Eating something before or while drinking slows down the absorption of alcohol into the blood.

2.1.4 Heart

[✖ highlight heart]

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death throughout Europe, accounting for approximately 30% of all deaths in Europe. Regular moderate alcohol consumption may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke mainly in men aged over 40 years and in postmenopausal women, when the risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke significantly increase.

Drinking alcohol is not recommended if you have uncontrolled, high blood pressure. If someone has an existing heart condition, alcohol can generally be drunk in moderation, but only if alcohol use does not affect the medication. A doctor's advice should be sought.

Drinking to excess or binge drinking puts considerable strain on the heart and increases your risk of heart attack, haemorrhagic stroke and irregular heart beat.

[More on the heart \(click here\)](#)

It is thought that alcohol itself accounts for 75% of the cardio-protective effects of alcoholic beverages. It favourably alters the balance of fats or lipids in the blood, by stimulating the liver to produce the 'good' high density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL). HDL removes the 'bad' low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) from arteries and veins for disposal via the bile, which is referred to as reverse cholesterol transport.

Alcohol decreases the clotting together or 'stickiness' of red blood cells, which if untreated could form a clot to block blood flow in an artery or vein to cause a heart attack or stroke.

Recent research suggests that one to two drinks per day for men and one for women do not exacerbate a heart condition. Exceeding this benchmark can significantly increase blood pressure, which would, therefore, exacerbate a heart condition.

2.1.5 Liver

[✖ highlight liver]

The liver breaks down most of the alcohol a person drinks. (The rest leaves the body in breath, urine and sweat.) The liver contains enzymes that break down alcohol to water and carbon dioxide which are harmless to the body.

However, your liver can only break down about one alcoholic drink an hour in an average adult, the rest circulates in your blood, brain and organs. The alcohol will remain circulating until it has all been broken down by the liver. If the body can't cope with all the alcohol in its system,

the person can pass out, or in extreme cases fall into an alcoholic coma (which can be fatal).

Long-term drinking kills off liver cells, leading to a disease called 'cirrhosis'. It's a 'silent' disease - symptoms may not be noticeable until the disease is advanced. Long-term excessive drinking can also lead to liver cancer or other cancers.

[For more on liver disease\(click here\)](#)

The liver contains enzymes that break down alcohol to water and carbon dioxide which are harmless to the body. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to three types of liver disease:

- **Fatty Liver** – a build up of fat. This can occur after a single session of heavy drinking or as a result of regular drinking over the recommended drinking guidelines. It reverses very quickly when alcohol is withdrawn and leaves no permanent damage. However if regular heavy drinking continues then about 15 – 20% of individuals will go on to develop more serious liver damage in the form of alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.
- **Alcoholic hepatitis** – this is an inflammation of the liver that can range from mild to severe. Individuals with mild to moderate alcoholic hepatitis may be unaware that they have liver damage while individuals with severe alcoholic hepatitis may develop liver failure. Alcoholic hepatitis may reverse in many individuals if they stop drinking immediately.
- **Alcoholic cirrhosis** - this results from a process where normal liver tissue is replaced by scar tissue, eventually leading to the liver's inability to function properly. Individuals with alcohol-related cirrhosis may not have any symptoms or signs or else they may develop several complications such as jaundice, fluid retention or serious bleeding from the oesophagus (gullet). Although alcoholic cirrhosis is not reversible, stopping alcohol can make a significant difference to survival.

2.1.6 Brain

[✖ highlight the brain in the head]

Alcohol acts as a depressant on the brain, the control centre of the body. It can make the drinker feel happy for a little while, but that's followed by a depressing low. Long-term drinking can kill off brain cells and lead to memory loss and mental problems.

For more on the impact of alcohol on brain (click here)

Forehead: Alcohol draws water out of the brain. So, as the body starts to metabolise the alcohol, the drinker may feel dizzy and may well get a throbbing headache if they drink too much.

Sleep: Alcohol suppresses REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. It's the most important phase of sleep so drinking can ruin the chance of a good night's rest.

Skin: Alcohol dehydrates the body, which is bad news for the skin and complexion. It also dilates the blood vessels under the surface of the skin, leading to ugly veins on the nose and cheeks.

Ears: After drinking alcohol, a person can find it harder to hear sounds or where they're coming from. This means they can't react properly to what's happening around them. This is one reason why so many accidents involving pedestrians happen when they've been drinking.

2.1.6 Pregnancy

[✖ highlight reproductive system]

If women drink more than once or twice a week, or more than one or two drinks each time, it could affect the menstrual cycle and fertility levels. Research suggests that drinking alcohol while trying to conceive may affect a woman's chances of getting pregnant and increase the risk of miscarriage.

A woman will not know for the first few weeks that she is pregnant. By not drinking alcohol while trying to conceive, the foetus will not be exposed to alcohol and the potential harm of alcohol to the critical early development of the foetus.

[Read more by clicking here](#) (link to 3.3)

2.2 Male Body Zone

✖ Recommendation

We recommend you use a graphic of the **human male body** which is mouse sensitive, leading you to information on each part of the body
Good examples can be viewed at:

<http://www.talkaboutalcohol.com/YoungPeople/FactZone/FactZoneFlash30.aspx>

<http://www.at-bristol.org.uk/alcoholandyou/effects/body.html#body>

2.2.1 Hey handsome!

[✖ highlight face]

Heavy alcohol consumption dilates blood vessels near the surface of the skin, causing ugly red capillaries or veins, especially around the nose and cheeks.

Bad breath? The liver metabolises most alcohol, but 5-10% is excreted straight through the urine, breath and sweat.

Bruises and scarring Heavy drinkers are more likely to have accidents or fights, leading to cuts, bruises and broken bones.

2.2.2 Vision

[✖highlight eyes]

Alcohol dilates blood vessels in the eyes, so they can look red and 'bloodshot' if you've over done it.. It also affects the signals sent from the eyes to the brain - vision becomes blurred, and distances and speeds get harder to judge as you drink more.

Many road accidents involve drivers or pedestrians who have alcohol in their blood.

The Beer goggles effect

Someone might appear a lot more attractive after a few drinks. That blurred vision could result in actions you regret when you sober up – even a permanent reminder if you don't practice safe sex. [Click here for tips on a great night out \(link to 5.1\)](#)

2.2.3 Blood and guts

[✖ highlight intestines]

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach walls and the intestines as a person drinks. The bloodstream carries the alcohol to the liver, which breaks down the alcohol... with any excess reaching the brain and other organs....a loss of inhibitions is sometimes one of the first effects.

As more alcohol is consumed the BAC rises. However the exact time that the body takes to absorb alcohol varies from one person to another.

Excessive alcohol irritates the stomach, so it can lead to nausea, cramps, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Eating something before or while drinking slows down the absorption of alcohol into the blood.

2.2.4 Fertility

[✖ highlight reproductive system]

Drinking alcohol can affect performance in the bedroom because the drinker's not fully in control of their body. Alcohol lowers the sperm count; and heavy drinking can cause temporary impotence.

Alcohol affects judgement too, so couples may have unsafe sex, increasing the risk of sexually transmitted disease or a long term commitment your weren't planning for!

Heavy drinking may lower testosterone levels in men and reduce the quality and quantity of sperm. It is recommended therefore that men should limit their alcohol intake to no more than one or two drinks a day if a couple is [trying for a baby.](#) ([link to 3.3](#))

2.2.5 Heart

[✖ highlight heart]

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death throughout Europe, accounting for approximately 30% of all deaths in Europe. Regular moderate alcohol consumption may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke mainly in men aged over 40 years and in postmenopausal women, when the risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke significantly increase.

Drinking alcohol is not recommended if you have uncontrolled, high blood pressure. If someone has an existing heart condition, alcohol can generally be drunk in moderation, but only if alcohol use does not affect the medication. A doctor's advice should be sought.

Drinking to excess or binge drinking puts considerable strain on the heart and increases your risk of heart attack, haemorrhagic stroke and irregular heart beat.

[More on the heart \(click here\)](#)

It is thought that alcohol itself accounts for 75% of the cardio-protective effects of alcoholic beverages. It favourably alters the balance of fats or lipids in the blood, by stimulating the liver to produce the 'good' high density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL). HDL removes the 'bad' low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) from arteries and veins for disposal via the bile, which is referred to as reverse cholesterol transport.

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Recent research suggests that one to two drinks per day for men and one for women does not exacerbate a heart condition.

Exceeding this benchmark can significantly increase blood pressure, which would, therefore, exacerbate a heart condition.

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[✖ highlight liver]

The liver breaks down most of the alcohol a person drinks. (The rest leaves the body in breath, urine and sweat.) The liver contains enzymes that break down alcohol to water and carbon dioxide which are harmless to the body.

However, your liver can only break down about one alcoholic drink an hour in an average adult, the rest circulates in your blood, brain and organs. The alcohol will remain circulating until it has all been broken down by the liver. If the body can't cope with all the alcohol in its system, the person can pass out, or in extreme cases fall into an alcoholic coma (which can be fatal).

Long-term drinking kills off liver cells, leading to a disease called 'cirrhosis'. It's a 'silent' disease - symptoms may not be noticeable until the disease is advanced. Long-term excessive drinking can also lead to liver cancer or other cancers.

[For more on Liver Disease, click here](#)

The liver contains enzymes that break down alcohol to water and carbon dioxide which are harmless to the body. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to three types of liver disease:

- **Fatty Liver** – a build up of fat. This can occur after a single session of heavy drinking or as a result of regular drinking over the recommended drinking guidelines. It reverses very quickly when alcohol is withdrawn and leaves no permanent damage. However if regular heavy drinking continues then about 15 – 20% of individuals will go on to develop more serious liver damage in the form of alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.
- **Alcoholic hepatitis** – this is an inflammation of the liver that can range from mild to severe. Individuals with mild to moderate alcoholic hepatitis may be unaware that they have liver damage while individuals with severe alcoholic hepatitis may develop liver failure. Alcoholic hepatitis may reverse in many individuals if they stop drinking immediately.
- **Alcoholic cirrhosis** - this results from a process where normal liver tissue is replaced by scar tissue, eventually leading to the liver's inability to function properly. Individuals with alcohol-related cirrhosis may not have any symptoms or signs or else they may develop several complications such as jaundice, fluid retention or serious bleeding from the oesophagus (gullet). Although alcoholic cirrhosis is not reversible, stopping alcohol can make a significant difference to survival.

2.2.7 Brain

[✖ highlight the brain in the head]

Alcohol acts as a depressant on the brain, the control centre of the body. It can make the drinker feel happy for a little while, but that's followed by a depressing low. Long-term drinking can kill off brain cells and lead to memory loss and mental problems.

For more on the impact of alcohol on brain ([click here](#))

Forehead: Alcohol draws water out of the brain. So, as the body starts to metabolise the alcohol, the drinker may feel dizzy and may well get a throbbing headache if they drink too much.

Sleep: Alcohol suppresses REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. It's the most important phase of sleep so drinking can ruin the chance of a good night's rest.

Skin: Alcohol dehydrates the body, which is bad news for the skin and complexion. It also dilates the blood vessels under the surface of the skin, leading to ugly veins on the nose and cheeks.

Ears: After drinking alcohol, a person can find it harder to hear sounds or where they're coming from. This means they can't react properly to what's happening around them. This is one reason why so many accidents involving pedestrians happen when they've been drinking.

2.3 The Fact Zone

✂ Recommendation

We recommend you use interactive techniques to introduce the information below (clicking on question marks, pictures, etc)

2.3.1 What is Alcohol?

Alcohol is ethanol or ethyl alcohol. There are many informal names for alcohol (e.g. booze, bevvy, drink), and there are many different types of alcoholic drink (e.g. beer, lager, wine, spirits and cider). But they all contain ethanol, or what we have come to call 'alcohol'.

Ethanol is made by a natural process, whereby yeast converts the sugar in fruits, cereals and cane sugar for example into alcohol. Pure alcohol is a colourless, clear liquid. The process used to make it is called fermentation.

Fermentation

Alcohol is formed when yeast feeds on sugar. This tiny organism grows and multiplies by feeding on sugar in foods such as grain and fruits. As the yeast feeds on the sugar, carbon dioxide and alcohol are produced.

sugar → energy + alcohol + carbon dioxide

Different drinks

In wine making, yeast acts on the sugar in crushed grapes. Different types of grapes give different flavours and colours to wines. In cider making, crushed apples are used. Beer is produced from malted grain - usually barley - to which hops have been added for flavour.

grapes	<i>fermentation</i> →	wine, champagne
apples	→	cider
cereal	→	beer

The amount of alcohol in drinks can be increased by a process called distillation. This produces spirits such as whisky, gin, vodka, cognac, palinka, slivovitz and rum, which usually contain about 40% pure alcohol. In this process, water and alcohol are separated, through boiling which results in higher alcohol concentrations.

Fortified wines (such as sherry and port) are wines that have spirit added to them, leading to a higher alcohol level (15% and over for sherry, 20% for port).

For more information about products, click here [add hyper-link to national website).

2.3.2 What makes you feel drunk?

Alcohol is a mood altering substance. It affects the nerves that pass messages around the body by slowing them down, and the more you drink the greater the effect. The reason people often get more lively when they've had a drink is that alcohol affects parts of the brain responsible for self-control. As you drink, the alcohol passes into your bloodstream.

Ethanol is the intoxicating part of alcohol and its molecules are so small that they can actually pass into the gaps between brain cells. There it can interfere with the neurotransmitters that enable all the brain's activities. If you drink fast, alcohol will start to flood the brain.

Fortunately, alcohol can give some warning signs as it penetrates into the brain and central nervous system so, if you spot the signs in yourself or a friend moderate your or their drinking, or stop drinking further amounts. The last thing you would want is to lose control, vomit or end up in hospital. Severe cases of heavy drinking can result in alcoholic poisoning, coma or death (link).

Your reactions also slow down, and as you drink more, you may become uncoordinated or unsteady on your feet. Your speech may get slurred and you may start seeing double. If you've had a lot to drink you may also experience strong emotional responses - for instance you may become aggressive or tearful. And because your judgement is impaired, you may do things that you might not normally do - from dancing on tables to going home with strangers. They may seem a good idea at the time, but can be extremely dangerous.

2.3.3 What are the classic warning signs of drunkenness

You feel giddy

You start to lose the thread of what you're saying

You feel unsteady on your feet

You start seeing double

Look for these signs in your friends too.

Tips to avoid feeling sick or passing out are to eat before you start drinking – even a bowl of cereal or a couple of pieces of toast will help. Try to avoid top ups as it is harder to keep track of what you're drinking - pace yourself - having a non-alcoholic drink between each alcoholic drink really helps slow your drinking down and gives your body a chance to break down the alcohol you have drunk

2.3.4 What are the dangers of drinking to drunkenness?

Drinking to drunkenness increases your risks of ending up in the Accident and Emergency Department, getting involved in a fight, not getting home safely, and of being robbed or sexually assaulted. So if you or a friend is the worse for wear, look out for each other, always plan [how you are going to get home](#) (link to 5.4) before going out and keep enough money aside in case of emergencies.

Although people who've developed high tolerance may not feel drunk, they still run a [serious risk of damaging their health](#) (link to 1.7).

2.3.5 What is 'Binge drinking?'

Binge drinking is a commonly used term that has no clear meaning. It differs in its medical and social usage from drinking to drunkenness, drinking five or more drinks in quick succession, or on one drinking occasion. Size of drinks vary from country to country ,too.

In terms of alcohol misuse it may be useful to describe harmful patterns of drinking as 'drinking to drunkenness ' or going out with the intention of getting drunk' as well as tracking the number of drinks consumed, time frame and context. The World Health Organisation has defined binge drinking as drinking six or more standard drinks during one drinking occasion

Whatever the definition, drinking to drunkenness and repeatedly subjecting the brain to the effects of withdrawal from the presence of large doses of alcohol i.e. having what people would term drinking 'binges', could damage brain cells even more than continuous drinking

2.3.6 What is tolerance?

People who drink regularly become less affected by alcohol as their bodies get used to it. They then need to drink more for it to have the same effect. This is called developing a tolerance to alcohol.

2.3.7 What is Blood Alcohol Concentration?

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach walls and the intestines as a person drinks. The bloodstream carries the alcohol to the brain and alcohol is then transported in the blood stream to the liver, which breaks down the alcohol, but can only manage approximately one unit an hour. As more alcohol is consumed the BAC rises. However the exact time that the body takes to absorb alcohol varies from one person to another. [Click here to find out more \(link to button 2\)](#)

Blood alcohol concentration is used by the police to test how much you've been drinking. A BAC of 0.08 [[✂ please use the BAC figure in your national legislation](#)] means that an individual has 0.08g of alcohol in their body for every 100ml (0.1L) of blood.

Be careful to check drink-drive laws if driving abroad as BAC limits vary from country to country. The USA and UK have a BAC maximum of 0.08g, whereas most of Europe has a limit of 0.05g (In Sweden it is 0.02g).

2.4 Myth Busters

[✂ Recommendation](#)

We recommend you use interactive techniques to introduce the information below (clicking on question marks, pictures, etc).

Are these commonly held beliefs true or false?

2.4.1 Drinking quickly won't result in more alcohol in my system than if I drink slowly

True/false?

If a person drinks alcohol quickly it will have [a greater effect because the alcohol is being drunk faster than the body can remove it \(link to button 2\)](#). If you drink fast, alcohol will start to flood the brain. Depending on how much and how fast you're drinking, it can affect the brain stem (even cause it to shut down) and this can interfere with vital body functions. A young person, or somebody unused to drink, may experience this after just a few standard drinks taken in one go

Your body's ability to process alcohol depends on your age, weight and sex. Your body breaks down alcohol at a rate of roughly one drink per hour - and there's no way you can speed this up ([link to hang over cures2.3.2](#))

Don't ever get involved in a competition to see who can drink either the most or the fastest... it can prove fatal.

2.4.2 Drinking on a full stomach means I will get less drunk

True/False?

Eating before or while drinking is a good idea. Food slows down the rate at which the bloodstream absorbs alcohol, giving your body more time to remove it and increases the break down of alcohol in the stomach (first pass metabolism).

The best advice is to eat before or while drinking, and to pace yourself with soft drinks or water and to limit your consumption to daily [responsible drinking guidelines\(link1.2\)](#)

2.4.3 Alcohol is not fattening

✂ Recommendation

Possibly insert a calorie table with the answer

True/false?

Dry wines, ciders, pure spirits and beers are fat free and almost sugar free, but contain calories.

A standard ½ litre of beer has approximately 130 calories, as does a 150ml glass of dry wine, less than a serving of apple juice.

It is important to include drinking alcohol only as part of a balanced diet and lifestyle, that is plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and exercise of course. .

If you're watching your weight, remember all alcoholic drinks contain calories. They can also make you feel hungry. Drinking alcohol stimulates your appetite while reducing your self-control, so you're more likely to binge eat if you [binge drink \(link to 2.3.3\)](#). Choose a diet mixer for spirits and watch out for cocktails if you're watching your weight. Fortified or dessert wines and liqueurs are much more calorific and sugar rich per serving, too.

For regular and heavy alcohol drinkers, up to 50% of calories consumed each day may be from alcohol, as alcohol is often drunk in preference to eating meals. Leading to long term [health risks \(link to 1.7\)](#).

2.4.4 Alcohol affects everyone in the same way

True/false?

Your size, weight, metabolism, [sex \(link to 2.1\)](#) as well as how and when you drink will all alter how alcohol affects you.

Drinking on an empty stomach or drinking fast, results in higher blood alcohol levels and these will also be affected by your size weight, health and age. Being very tired, ill or stressed may affect a person's reaction to alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant and places stress on the body systems

which may result in you being affected more by alcohol when tired or run down.

2.4.5 Drinking coffee or having a shower will sober me up and stop me getting a hangover

True/false?

Nothing can speed up the break down of alcohol in your blood stream except time and plenty of water. Even one or two drinks will affect your coordination, judgement and reaction, so plan how you're getting home before you go out or nominate a [designated driver \(link to 4.2\)](#). Never be tempted to [drink and drive \(link to button 4\)](#) you risk losing your licence, job – and worse.

A hangover can't be cured, although some people believe a strong coffee, a cold shower or fizzy drinks can help. In fact, time is the only cure, allowing the liver to get on with its job in eliminating the alcohol from your system, helped along by drinking lots of water.

Symptoms of a hangover include feeling thirsty, sick, tired and headachey, and being more sensitive to noise and bright lights. These effects are caused by alcohol acting as a 'diuretic'. This means that alcohol makes the body lose too much water, causing dehydration. Alcohol also irritates the lining of the stomach, leading to indigestion, nausea and dehydration. [Click here for tips \(link to 5\)](#).

2.4.6 The Mediterranean diet is about losing weight

True/false?

The Mediterranean diet is not about losing weight, but about eating a diet low in red meats, high in vegetables, pulses, pasta and fruit, combined with fish, olive oil and alcohol, in moderation.

Studies have shown that a , 'Mediterranean' type diet, leads to greater longevity and a significant reduction in [heart disease \(link to 2.2.5\)](#), [late on set diabetes \(link to 2.5.5\)](#) and stroke.

Apply the "Five a day" recommendation: By following the "five heart" healthy lifestyle factors of staying slim, not smoking, exercising gently daily and eating a balanced diet high in fibre, fruit and vegetables and low in saturated fats and drinking between 1/2 and two drinks a day, you more than halve your risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke.

2.5 What if?

These are the commonly asked questions regarding alcohol and health

✳ Recommendation

We recommend you use interactive techniques to introduce the information below (clicking on question marks, pictures, etc).

2.5.1 I choose not to drink?

If you choose not to drink alcohol, people should support you in this, and [you shouldn't feel pressured to drink.](#) ([link to 3.2.2](#)).

There are many good health, family and social reasons why you may decide not to drink. These include personal, cultural and religious considerations.

The potential protection that alcohol provides against heart disease and other diseases is only significant for people aged from about 40 and over, as that's when these diseases are more common. A healthy diet, staying slim, regular exercise and not smoking will provide similar health benefits.

2.5.2 I'm worried about my drinking?

People who feel they have trouble keeping the amounts they drink within moderate limits should not drink and/or should seek advice from their doctor. To [check your drinking](#) ([link to 1.9](#))

Drinking might appear to give you a quick lift, but long term it will only increase feelings of depression. If you're finding it difficult to cope, it's important to get help from your GP. If you don't have a GP, now may be a good time to register with one. It is always better to get to know a GP before one is really needed. Also the GP will be in a far better position to help you if he/she already knows you.

2.5.3 I'm allergic?

A food allergy is where a normally harmless substance is perceived as a threat by the body's immune system. In sufferers, even light alcohol consumption can cause an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions include migraine headaches, itchiness, rashes, bowel colic, diarrhea, asthma, swollen facial features and watery swollen eyes. If you suffer these symptoms on drinking alcohol, consult your doctor.

Many consumers think that the main cause of an adverse reaction to alcohol is due to sulphur dioxide, which is an antioxidant and preservative. Unless an individual has a similar reaction when eating dried fruits, such as apricots (preserved with much higher levels of SO₂) this is unlikely.

Yeast Allergy

Generally most drinks can be drunk without an allergic reaction occurring, because although yeast is used for fermentation of beer, cider and wine, a

negligible amount remains in the finished product. A certain concentration of yeast breakdown products will, however, remain in the finished beverage. If an intolerance to yeast is experienced, consumers should avoid wines that are aged 'sur lie', this means aged on the yeast cells for extra complexity or cask conditioned ales.

2.5.4 I have asthma?

If asthma is triggered by sulphur compounds, such as sulphur dioxide (SO₂), then fermented beverages should not be consumed as SO₂ is used as a preservative and is a natural by product of fermentation. If the asthma is not triggered by sulphur compounds, then alcoholic drinks are unlikely to trigger an asthma attack.

2.5.5 I have diabetes?

People with diabetes can consume alcohol, but preferably with a meal. The consumption of alcohol without food can cause blood sugar level to fall unexpectedly (hypoglycemia), in particular, if on insulin. If more than a light to moderate amount of alcohol is drunk, alcohol can react with many of the prescribed diabetic medications and worsen the side effects of diabetes such as increased blood pressure.

Recommendations are a maximum of two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women.

Which drinks?

Low sugar or 'dry' varieties of wine are recommended for diabetics. These include still and sparkling styles and also dry sherry, but not a sweet or medium dry/sweet sherry or sweet dessert wines. Beers and spirits (avoid sweet mixers) are fine but high sugar liqueurs and fortified wines should also be avoided.

If your diabetes is well controlled drinking moderately probably won't affect short-term blood glucose control. However, drinking above the recommended guidelines can result in serious hypoglycaemia, particularly if you are taking insulin or sulphonylurea tablets or if you haven't eaten enough carbohydrate.

Delayed hypoglycaemia may occur up to 16 hours after heavy drinking. So if you overdo it, keep your blood glucose levels topped up with carbohydrate. After drinking, make sure you have carbohydrate before you go to bed and at breakfast, and monitor your blood glucose levels closely.

If you have diabetes, follow these useful tips when you drink

If you drink alcohol, make sure it's always shortly before, during or after a meal

- Never drink on an empty stomach. The alcohol will be absorbed into your blood stream too quickly Choose 'dry' drinks, such as dry wine and beer and avoid mixing spirits with juice mixers – choose a slimline tonic or low sugar alternative. Avoid dessert wines, port or sweet sherries for example
- Do not substitute alcoholic drinks for your usual meal or snacks. It could lead to hypoglycaemia
- If you're watching your weight, remember all alcoholic drinks contain calories. They can also make you feel hungry
- You may be less aware of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia when you are drinking, so always wear some form of diabetes identification.

For more information on alcohol and diabetes, talk to your Dietician, Diabetes Specialist Nurse, or GP.

2.5.6 I'm a vegetarian or vegan?

The class of vegetarian will determine whether alcohol can be drunk. Wine may have been clarified with egg albumin (egg protein), casein (milk protein), gelatin (beef) or isinglass (fish), which are all compounds derived from animals. Beer is clarified with isinglass. Essentially all of the clarifying agent is removed prior to bottling and hence does not remain in the finished product.

Button 3: Lifestages

Responsible drinking guidelines apply to an average adult. There are times, or situations in our lives which these general guidelines do not cover. Health or social situations also change throughout our lives, hence this area of the websites looks at different life stages and gives alternative guidance where appropriate

3.1 Under 18 years old

✂ Recommendation

To address this section in depth, you are invited to visit www.talkaboutalcohol.com website which you can develop in your own country. Please contact EFRD for more information

Young people are advised not to drink, unless it is a little in a family situation, because they are less well equipped to cope with the effects of alcohol, physically and emotionally.

The same amount of alcohol will have a much greater effect on the body of a child or young person than on an adult, because their bodies are still growing and developing.

This is why there are laws setting an age limit to buy alcohol in shops or bars [[✂ insert information on your national legislation](#)].

3.2 18-30 Club

✂ Recommendation

- ▶ Possible development of virtual party for 18-30 years old. See example at <http://www.at-bristol.org.uk/alcoholandyou/Test/measure.html>
- ▶ <http://www.at-bristol.org.uk/alcoholandyou/Test/stickysituations.html>
- ▶ We recommend you use interactive techniques to introduce the information below (clicking on question marks, pictures, etc).

Introduction

Most young adults enjoy drinking without getting drunk in Europe [[✂ option to link to statistics](#)] and it's important to remember that if you feel you're being put under pressure to '[keep up' with your mates](#) ([link to 3.2.2](#)) We've put together some [tips](#) ([link to 5](#)) to help you stay in control and have a good time.

You may feel it's unfair your age group is always in the press for uncontrolled ['binge drinking'](#) (link to 2.3.3), but the truth is you're more likely to go home with a stranger, end up in bed with someone you regret, embarrass yourself and your mates or be robbed if you get drunk than older age groups.

Remember to avoid alcohol completely if you're [driving](#) (link to 4), working at a height or operating machinery. Never mix alcohol with drugs – either prescribed drugs, unless cleared with your G.P., or illegal drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and so on.

Some 'over the counter' remedies are also potentially harmful when taken with alcohol, so avoid anti-histamines and most cough medicines as they often contain sedative substances that you may not think of as 'drugs'.

Also, be careful about drinking alcohol while playing sport or after having played sport as you may be dehydrated. For more information on alcohol and sport, [click here](#). (link to 3.2.4).

3.2.1 Drinking too much - Is it worth it?

If you let your drinking get out of control, you're far more likely to be involved in an accident, a violent incident or get in trouble with the police, affecting your chances of a good career if you end up with a criminal record or losing your licence through letting things get out of hand.

Even [drinking to get drunk](#) (link to 2.3.3) occasionally can have serious consequences. It impairs your judgement and can increase risky behaviour [link to The down side of drinking too much via 1.7](#)

So if you or a friend are the worse for wear, look out for each other ([link to a great night out](#)), always plan how you are going to get home ([link to getting home safely](#)) before going out and keep enough money aside in case of emergencies.

3.2.2 Resisting Peer pressure – go on have another one

It's sometimes very hard to resist your mates encouragement to have another drink, or not to feel a party pooper if you say no or move to drinking soft drinks. You may also think you want your money's worth if you've bought a big round of drinks early in the evening and it's your friends turn to buy the drinks.

Tips

Try and avoid big rounds of drinks. You'll be out of pocket and it could encourage you to drink too much

Sip your drinks and make them last and avoid top ups as it's hard to work out how much you've drunk otherwise
If you choose a low alcohol beer or tonic – who can tell the difference?

Offer to be the [designated driver](#) ([link to 4](#)) for the evening – it'll save you all money and you'll be very popular with your friends if you get them home safely

Eat before you go out, it'll help you keep your judgement and stop the drink going to your head too quickly

[Click here for tips if you have overdone it](#) ([link to 5](#))

3.2.3 What do I do if it all goes wrong ?

Drinking very large amounts in one session can lead to acute alcohol poisoning which in turn can result in unconsciousness, a coma, or even death

It's essential to get emergency help...

If someone loses consciousness after drinking too much, here's what to do:

- Keep them on their side with their head turned to the side (the recovery position).
- Make sure they're breathing and their mouth and airways are clear.
- If they stop breathing, start mouth to mouth resuscitation.
- Loosen any tight clothing that might restrict their breathing.
- Keep them warm (but not too hot) - with blankets or a coat.
- Call an ambulance but don't leave them... ask someone reliable to call the ambulance.

If someone vomits you should:

- Try to keep them sitting up.
- If they must lie down, make sure they're in the recovery position and that their mouth and airway are clear.
- If they begin to choke, get help immediately.

Don't leave them even if you can't bear the sight or smell of someone vomiting. Alcohol poisoning is extremely dangerous. It can lead to a coma and in extreme cases, death. The amount of alcohol it takes to cause alcohol poisoning depends on many factors, including size, weight, age and so on. Teenagers and inexperienced drinkers are particularly vulnerable.

Someone may have alcohol poisoning if:

- They are breathing less than twelve times a minute or stop breathing for periods of ten seconds or more.
- They're asleep and you can't wake them up.
- Their skin is cold, clammy, pale and bluish in colour.

If you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning, treat it as a medical emergency - call an ambulance. Stay with the person until help arrives.

3.2.4 What if I enjoy sports?

If you play sport seriously, you need to be aware of the effects of alcohol.

Alcohol and sport are not good mixers. Alcohol slows down reaction times, increases body heat loss and reduces endurance..

Endurance

The blood sugar your body needs for energy is produced by the liver releasing glucose into the bloodstream. Alcohol reduces your body's ability to produce this sugar, so you have less energy and less endurance capacity.

Body heat loss

If you've ever had that feeling of running hot and cold after a big night, you'll recognise this symptom. First, alcohol in your system makes you feel feverish, then you lose body heat too fast, leading possibly to hypothermia. The longer you play or train, or the colder the weather, the greater the risk.

Reaction times

The relaxant properties of alcohol can continue well after you've finished drinking. Alcohol affects the central nervous system and slows down the information processing ability of the brain. This in turn affects your reactions, coordination, accuracy and balance - all the things most important for staying on top in any sport.

Sport injuries and muscle cramps

Alcohol increases the bleeding and swelling around soft tissue injuries (sprains, bruises and cuts, which are the most common sport injuries) so you take longer to recover. Alcohol also masks pain, so you might delay getting treatment, which could make all the difference to a speedy recovery.

If you've been injured, avoid alcohol - at least until you've had treatment.

During exercise, your muscles burn sugar, producing lactic acid. Too much lactic acid leads to muscle fatigue and cramps.

The alcohol left in your system after a few drinks the night before contributes to a bigger build up of lactic acid, and dramatically increases the risk of you cramping up.

✂ Recommendation

Insert picture, example of accidents with your traditional national sports or common ones such as skiing, snowboarding

3.2.5 Some scary stats

✂ Recommendation

This point is optional and should of course be adapted with your national figures, both positive and negative.

3.3 Pregnancy and conception

3.3.1 Drinking and conception

If women drink more than once or twice a week, or more than one or two drinks each time, it could affect the menstrual cycle and fertility levels. Research suggests that drinking alcohol while trying to conceive may affect a woman's chances of getting pregnant and increase the risk of miscarriage.

A woman will not know for the first few weeks that she is pregnant. By not drinking alcohol while trying to conceive, the foetus will not be exposed to alcohol and the potential harm of alcohol to the critical early development of the foetus.

3.3.2 Drinking when pregnant

If you drink when you're pregnant, alcohol from your blood crosses the placenta and enters the baby's blood. As the foetus is still developing it takes longer for its liver to break down the alcohol, potentially exposing its organs and tissues to alcohol. As no threshold of safe drinking when pregnant has been established, the best advice if pregnant or planning to conceive is not to drink.

In the first three months, heavy drinking can damage the developing organs and nervous system. Continued heavy drinking for the remaining six months can have the additional effects of retarding its growth and development, which can lead to both behavioural and physical problems for the baby once it is born. A good diet, sufficient fluid intake and not smoking during pregnancy will also help provide a healthy environment for the unborn baby.

3.3.3 Breastfeeding

Alcohol clears from a mother's milk at the rate of around one drink every two hours. So it is best to avoid alcohol before breastfeeding, or to plan ahead and express milk if drinking alcohol later. Alcohol in the mother's bloodstream passes into breast milk and can cause irritability, poor feeding and sleep disturbance. It can also reduce the amount of breast milk produced.

3.3.4 Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a term which covers a range of behavioural and physical problems which may result from heavy drinking during pregnancy. They have been classified as:

- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
- Partial Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)
- Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD)
- Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopment Disorder (ARND)

The syndromes, defects, or disorders are sometimes accompanied by other behavioural disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). FASD is not genetic, inherited or curable. Not all women who drink during pregnancy will have a child with FASD but research shows that drinking alcohol heavily or binge drinking during pregnancy increases the chance of the foetus being harmed. Some of the behavioural and physical problems identified include:

- Prenatal growth retardation and associated low birth weight
- Central nervous system dysfunction
- Characteristic facial malformations (FAS)
- Heart and kidney defects
- Hearing and sight impairments
- Limited joint movement
- Hernias
- Cleft lip or palate
- Brain damage

3.4 Parents zone

✂ Recommendation

- ▶ The text below is the current part of the script of the "parents" section on the www.talkaboutalcohol.com website. You are invited to visit the site to get ideas on how to present the information in an interactive way.

▶ The other alternative is to implement the www.talkaboutalcohol.com website in your country and refer to it in this section. Please contact EFRD for more information.

Children are naturally curious about alcohol - they see people drinking it or advertisements promoting it - and they want to know more. As a parent, what you say and do has a big influence on your child, but it can be difficult to know when to talk about alcohol, and what to say.

This section gives tips and guidance for parents about approaching the issue with their children, particularly 11-16 year-olds. Talking about it early on will help your child to understand alcohol and its effects, and make sensible choices about drinking in the future.

3.4.1 You, your child and alcohol

Children are influenced by many different factors – their friends, their teachers, TV, films the media, etc. However, in most cases, parents have the biggest influence on their children’s behaviour and this includes how the children approach alcohol.

Adolescence is a transition period between puberty and adulthood. This period of life, roughly from 10 to 20 years of age (“teenagers”), is a critical time of development on many different levels, especially on initiation and escalation of alcohol use. Because parents play an important role during child development and because there are important continuities from childhood to adolescence; it is important to disseminate research findings on what to do or what to say depending on age and gender of children.

That means that parents need to address the issue with their children, discussing the issues and agreeing some rules that the family will stick to.

For example, an investigation into substance abuse among young people found that when parental monitoring is in place – that is knowing where their kids are, and who they’re with, they are much less likely to begin using drugs.

Another report found that in 30 out of 31 countries surveyed young people consumed significantly more alcohol when their parents did not know how they spent Saturday nights. [*✖ use the figures for your country as well from the ESPAD report: www.espad.org]*

The resources on this site will help you to communicate with your child about alcohol and make the most of the influence over them that you have.

3.4.2 Why should I talk to my child about alcohol?

It can be difficult to know when to raise the issue of alcohol with your child, and what to say. Most children are aware of alcohol from an early age, and ideally you should talk to your child about drinking before they start experimenting with alcohol. If you find they've already started, it's important to understand why they might want to.

What you say and do really influences your child, so you're in a good position to make sure they have the facts about alcohol and drinking, and can make sensible choices in the future.

When should I raise the subject?

Try to avoid forcing the issue - it's better to wait until the subject comes up naturally. You could pick up on a newspaper story about alcohol, or something that's on television; or wait until your child asks you questions about drinking.

Do whatever feels comfortable for you and your family, but ideally you should discuss the issue before your child starts experimenting with alcohol or faces pressure from their peers. Be prepared to say NO if you are uncomfortable with party situations and lay down ground rules.

What should I say?

Even young children are aware of what is and isn't acceptable behaviour for adults and children when it comes to alcohol. So you can start talking to them about drinking at quite an early age. Parenting skills aren't taught and there's no blueprint for bringing up children. Every child and every family is different, and we all communicate in our own way.

You need to aim for a balance: warning them of the dangers, including taking aspirin with alcohol which can intensify alcoholic poisoning, and making them aware of the laws; but also saying that they can enjoy moderate social drinking when they're adults if they choose to.

The important thing is to focus on the facts, and to give your child the knowledge and skills to avoid the dangers associated with alcohol. You could explain the effect of alcohol on the body and mind, and that even small amounts will affect their ability to make rational judgements and sensible decisions.

At what age should I allow my child to drink?

There is no agreed age at which it is considered 'normal' for children to drink. Some parents allow their children to try a little alcohol with them on special occasions; others prefer not to. There is some evidence that shows drinking at an earlier age increases the possibility of alcohol-related harm later on, but other studies show young people introduced to drinking in

the home, with good parental role models are less likely to binge and more likely to develop moderate drinking habits. But it's up to you to decide whether and how much your child can drink at home.

Whatever you decide, stick to your guns and make sure your child understands why it can be dangerous for young people to drink. They should also know that there are laws restricting the age at which you can buy and drink alcohol. Just because adults are drinking alcohol at home, children should understand they can't automatically do the same.

3.4.3 Tactics to get talking

Take it a step at a time

Finding the right balance between protecting your child and giving them freedom isn't easy. You can't be by their side all the time, and they wouldn't thank you for it anyway.

However, with communication and trust, you can help them to make the right decision in a tricky situation, learn from their mistakes, come to you for advice when needed and still stay safe.

Making a few small changes can make a big difference - but don't expect success overnight. Just take it one step at a time.

Nobody's perfect

Recognise that neither you nor your child will always get it right. What works for one child or one set of circumstances may not work for another. Take the view that mistakes (yours and theirs) are inevitable, and the important thing is to learn from them.

Know your child

Get to know your child as an individual. Do you really know what they like and dislike - about themselves or the world around them? What would they change about their life (or you!) if they could?

Take the time to ask them, and to really listen to their answers. You may find you don't know them as well as you think you do; and they will feel that their opinions really matter.

Create a bond

When children feel a valued member of a stable group, they may be more likely to stick to the agreed rules. Give your child a sense of belonging by doing things together - finding out what they enjoy, cooking up a treat, getting out and about as a family.

Establishing some routines means you can spend some time together, gives more opportunities for you to talk to each other, and helps your child to feel they can come to you if they have a problem.

Make them feel respected

It may seem obvious, but letting your child know they're respected often gets overlooked in busy lives. Your child's opinions matter, and they should feel they can express their views in a supportive environment. Let them know in good time of any changes that will affect them, and let them know you're proud of them too. If their friends get into trouble and your child wasn't involved, say how proud you are that they acted so maturely.

Set limits

It's important that children know the ground rules, and the consequences of not sticking to them. They will test them, so don't make threats you're not prepared to carry out. An effective 'punishment' is to remove privileges - a planned trip to the cinema, having friends over, watching TV.

But don't forget to praise them when they do the right thing. Giving reasons for the rules helps children to stick to them and develops a sense of responsibility. Knowing who they're with and when they'll be back is important for their safety, and not just your sanity.

Trust them

Trusting your child means they'll feel they can tell you the truth (especially about unacceptable or risky things), and you won't get angry or judge them. Being willing to listen to their side of the story, and talking through the other options, will help them to make sensible choices in the future.

Trust is essential to open and honest communication. If your child feels safe discussing difficult issues with you, then they'll talk to you when they need to and listen to what you have to say.

Make sure they're informed

Children are often much more informed than we realise - but they don't always know the facts. Whatever the issue, make sure your child has the right information, and knows where to go if they want to find out more.

Try to avoid lecturing or scare tactics, and instead discuss the pros and cons objectively together. Use language your child understands and examples that are relevant to them, and encourage them to share their views too.

Show how it's done

As the parent or carer, don't underestimate the influence of your own actions, attitudes, words and choices. These have a huge impact on your child's behaviour. Consider what message your example gives to your

child. It's difficult to encourage them to make sensible decisions if they don't have a good role model!

3.4.4 Practical ways of delaying teenage drinking:

- Make sure you know the facts and laws about alcohol ([link to button 1](#)) and can talk in a balanced and constructive way.
- Talk and listen to your teenager. It is important that they hear your views and that you hear theirs. Use everyday opportunities, for example a storyline in a T.V. programme, as a prompt
- Have family rules, discuss them with all members, and be clear about what is allowed and not allowed and have consequences for breaking rules and enforce them.
- If your teenager is going to a party drop them off and pick them up. Agree the time they will be leaving the party. Confer with the host parents about supervision and their plans.
- Be careful where you leave alcohol in the house. Know how much you have and check it regularly. If you are away for the night it is unfair to your teenagers to leave them in a situation where they have access to a large supply of drink.
- Supervise parties at home and always serve food. Ensure there is adult supervision of parties in friends' homes.
- Understand the pressure's they're facing from peers and wanting to fit in. Don't fly off the handle if you discover they've been drinking, [talk it through and explain the risks \(link to 3.2\)](#) they are taking.

When they are heading out make sure:

- They have eaten a good meal
- Tell them to keep their mobiles on and to call if there are any problems
- Drop them off and pick them up
- Remind them to never
 - Leave their drink as it could be spiked
 - Drink and drive
 - Take a lift from someone they suspect has taken drink or drugs
 - Leave on their own.

3.5 While at work

✳ Recommendation

Make sure you adapt the content of this section to your national law and guidelines on alcohol and workplace as well as to introduce a contact list where employees could seek support.

You don't have to be drunk to run into drink-related difficulties at work - many alcohol-related performance problems are associated with relatively

low blood alcohol concentrations – the result of a few drinks at lunch or a hang over from the night before.

Alcohol, if not consumed in moderation and on appropriate occasions, can impair your performance at work in the short-term and the long-term.

In the short-term, raised blood alcohol levels jeopardize efficiency and safety. Even after drinking the smallest amount of alcohol you are more likely to make mistakes and errors of judgment. You also significantly increase the risk of having an accident.

In the long-term, persistent heavy drinking can cause a number of social, psychological and medical problems, including alcohol dependence. Persistent heavy drinking frequently leads to poor performance at work and increased absence due to sickness. People who drink heavily over a long period of time often experience a rapid deterioration in their physical and interpersonal skills.

If you need more....

[✕Contact list for trade unions, medical supports, NGOs, etc](#)

3.6 Older People

3.6.1 A Spirited Old Age?

Everyone ages at a different rate, so as you age you need to regularly reassess your drinking and how it affects you. Your body's ability to process alcohol decreases with age. This is because your body's water content decreases, which means there's a higher concentration of alcohol in your blood.

However, evidence does now strongly suggest that a small amount of alcohol - just one or two drinks a day - can help prevent coronary heart disease in men over 40 and postmenopausal women.

The UK Government guidelines explain that middle aged or elderly non drinkers or infrequent drinkers and especially those at risk for heart disease "may wish to consider the possibility that light drinking may be of benefit to their overall health and life expectancy."

Heavy alcohol consumption will, however, cause neural damage and memory loss.

You must also be careful about mixing prescription medicines and alcohol – ask your GP for advice if you are unsure.

Drinking might also make you unsteady on your feet; and if you fall, you're more likely to have a serious injury, such as broken bones.

Of course, having a daily drink isn't a panacea – but if you can manage at any age to stick to the five 'healthy heart' recommendations of staying slim, not smoking, taking regular exercise, and having plenty of fruit and vegetables and little saturated fat in your diet and stick to drinking in moderation, you increase your life expectancy, due to a lower risk of stroke, late onset diabetes and heart attack.

As well as the 'heart- healthy' benefits of [responsible drinking \(link to 1.2\)](#) for older people, research is also finding that moderate drinking may reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

3.6.2 Prescribed Medicine

If you take any medication, you need to read the labels and leaflets to check that it is safe to use with alcohol. This applies to over the counter medicines, prescribed medicines and herbal medicines.

Medication that slows you down or sedates you can be dangerous when combined with alcohol. Refer to your GP or pharmacist for advice on any specific medication you have been prescribed or are taking.

Illegal drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin should never be combined with alcohol, as it can make their effects even more harmful; leading to potential liver failure and death. This also applies for methadone, the legal alternative to heroin. The combination of alcohol with cannabis is also very dangerous, especially for young people under the age of 20.

3.7 For further information

✂ Insert local links related to older people, parents, young people, etc

Button 4: Drinking and driving

Safe driving requires good vision, sound judgment and fast reaction times. Alcohol, a depressant, impairs all three. Your ability to drive a car or any other vehicle safely, may be impaired at blood alcohol levels well below the legal limit.

The message is clear: alcohol and driving don't mix. If you drink and drive you run a real risk of killing or injuring yourself and others. You also run the risk of being arrested and convicted of drunk driving – an experience that involves court costs, legal fees, higher car insurance rates, fines, loss of license and/or imprisonment.

If you're going round to friends for supper, out on the town or just going for a drink or two, the best advice is to agree a non-drinking [designated driver \(link to 4.3\)](#) before you go out for the evening, or to arrange a taxi/transport to take you home.

4.1 What is BAC?

BAC stands for blood alcohol concentration – that is the amount of alcohol in the blood stream and it is how the police measure how much you have been drinking.

4.1.1 What affects the amount of alcohol in your blood?

Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach walls and the intestines as a person drinks. A loss of inhibitions is sometimes one of the first effects. As more alcohol is consumed the BAC rises. However the exact time that the body takes to absorb alcohol varies from one person to another. A number of different factors affect your BAC, such as how much have you eaten; what time of day it is; your mood; your metabolism; your fatigue levels – all these things count.

4.1.2 Men

A man's BAC will generally increase by 0.02 for each standard drink. A man's BAC will generally decrease by approximately 1 standard drink an hour. The consumption of alcohol with a meal will slow the absorption of alcohol, giving your liver more time to break it down. The BAC recorded will, therefore, be higher when alcohol is consumed on an empty stomach.

4.1.3 Women

A woman's BAC will generally increase by between 0.02 to 0.03 for each standard drink and will decrease by approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a standard drink an hour. These rates are higher than men as women tend to be smaller and have more fatty tissue per kg body weight: drink-for-drink this increases the exposure of organs and tissue to alcohol. Males also have more body water, and more of the enzyme ADH which breaks down alcohol, in their stomachs – this means that alcohol is more concentrated in the body fluids of women drinking the same amount as a male.

4.1.4 Thinking Distance

Alcohol's effect on the brain slows down a person's reaction times – you take longer to respond to situations and hazards. If the person is driving a car (or riding a moped, motorcycle or bicycle), their 'thinking distance' is increased. For example, if a cat ran out in front of the car, there is a short delay between the driver seeing the hazard and putting their foot on the brake. The distance traveled by the car during this time is the 'thinking distance'. It is estimated that just one alcoholic drink can increase a driver's thinking distance by up to 20%.

Research shows that a driver who is over the limit will experience one or all of the following when you get behind the wheel

- You will underestimate the distance and speed of other vehicles on the road.
- Your vision will be affected, slowing your reaction time and
- You will almost certainly overestimate your ability.

4.2 Designated Driver

✂ Recommendation

Expand with your national designated driver campaign

This is a term used for a non alcohol drinking driver nominated by a group of people before they go out to ensure they get home safely at the end of the evening.

If you're going as a group and taking a car then decide beforehand who's going to be the designated driver. You could all buy non-alcoholic drinks for him or her, and pay for the petrol too.

4.3 Other ways of getting home safely

The key to getting home safely is planning ahead with your mates. At the start of your night out, think about how you and your friends will get home, keep enough money aside, find out the time of public transport or have a reliable taxi number to hand and never go home on your own.

If you have to walk home, don't walk through unlit or unsafe areas and avoid walking on your own. Don't let your friends wander off by themselves either, especially if they're drunk.

✂ Recommendation

Insert links with public transport information (eg, bus or train schedule) as well as list of taxi numbers.

4.4 The letter of the law

✂ Recommendation

Local laws and penalty information to be added here and relevant links

Button 5: Top Tips Zone**5.1 Enjoying a safe Night Out**

- Eat before you go out, or during the evening.
- Try to avoid buying large rounds of drinks, instead limit rounds to 2 or 3 friends. If you find yourself in a round but feel that others are drinking faster than you – or over recommended limits - it's OK to skip a drink, or remove yourself from the round altogether.
- Drink water regularly to stay refreshed and hydrated.
- Use soft drink beverages to pace yourself.
- Remember that too much drink will do nothing for your looks - you're drop dead gorgeous until you drop down drunk.
- And don't succumb to the beer goggles effect - you might think you've met your dream date - until the effect wears off.
- Don't accept drinks from strangers and never leave your drink unattended - it's all too easy for someone to *spike* your drink..... with more alcohol, for example.
- Plan how you're going to get home before you leave. If you haven't got a designated driver, make sure you've got the number for a reliable taxi or that know the times of public transport and keep aside enough money to get home safely.
- If you have to walk home, don't walk through unlit or unsafe areas and avoid walking on your own. Don't let your friends wander off by themselves either, especially if they're drunk.
- Carry a condom - and insist on using it if you get it together.
- Look out for your friends and make sure they look out for you

5.2 The Perfect Host

When you're having a party, you want your guests to have a great time, naturally. However you want to be a responsible host too so here are some simple ways to help guests enjoy the party without putting themselves or others at risk of harm or feeling like "death warmed up" the day after.

- Keep an eye on the sizes of measures – don't be too generous and try to stick to pub measures and smaller glasses
- Offer water and alcohol free alternatives.
- Serve food - it really helps to soak up the alcohol.
- Watch the strength of mix in home made cocktails – use plenty of ice and mixers.
- If people have had a bit too much to drink, encourage them (very nicely) to have a soft drink. Tell a 'white lie' – like the beer has run out!
- Keep a special eye out for young people and make sure they're OK.

- Make sure everyone can get home safely, using a designated driver, public transport, or taxi.
- Have taxi phone numbers available and if at all possible pre-book.
- As host make sure to set a good example, drink in moderation.

5.3 Safer Summer Holidays

Whatever your age, if you're going away for sun, sea and sangria, have a great time - just try and remember these simple tips.

- If you travel by air, especially on long flights don't be tempted to drink too much, even if it is free! Water and soft drinks are better choice as both alcohol and altitude dehydrate you
- Alcohol dehydrates you, and the heat of the sun makes it worse. Take regular breaks and drink at least a litre of water a day.
- Don't let drink lead you into risky situations, with strangers, swimming pools or unknown places.
- Mixing drink with sports, from volleyball to rock climbing, can lead to injuries. So play it safe. Likewise, midnight swimming and drinking is never advisable.
- If you're going out in the car, decide beforehand who's going to be your designated driver. It's their job to make sure you all get home safely.
- Carry a condom, so you can practise safe sex.
- Bars abroad often serve larger measures of spirits than at home so just two vodkas could be the same as four or five at home.
- When you're relaxing in a beer garden, on the beach, or at a BBQ, lather on the sun lotion. A combination of hangover and sunburn is enough to spoil anyone's holiday.
- In some countries, alcohol is restricted or banned. Consult your guidebook or travel agent before you go, and respect local laws and customs. Apart from being common courtesy, ignoring advice can lead to serious punishment.
- When waiting for your flight at the airport don't drink too much as you may not be allowed to travel.
- Many insurance companies won't pay up if you have an accident after drinking too much. It is important to check drink drive limits when abroad as they may be lower .
- Most of Europe has a BAC limit of **0.05** (*Sweden 0.02 and Hungary zero*) – and in the US it is illegal to have **any** alcohol in your blood if you're under 21 and driving. Don't risk spending your holiday behind bars – nominate one amongst the group to be the designated driver before you go out, book a taxi, or use public transport.

5.4 Top tips for the morning after

If in spite of your best intentions you end up drinking more than you should, there are a few things you can do to ease the morning after.

- Drink as much water as you can before going to sleep, and put some beside the bed too.
- Take an antacid to settle your stomach.
- Alcohol is a depressant, so tea or coffee can perk you up (but they can also dehydrate you, so keep up the water as well). Drinking lowers your blood sugar level, so eat as soon as you can. Bananas, cereal, or egg on toast are all good morning-after snacks.
- Never ever do *hair of the dog* - you'll just prolong the agony.
- Have 48 hours without alcohol if it was a heavy session.
- And next time, follow our [top tips for a great night out \(link to 5.1\)](#) and you won't suffer again.

5.5 What if it all goes wrong

Drinking very large amounts in one session can lead to acute alcohol poisoning which in turn can result in unconsciousness, a coma, or even death. [Click here to know about what to do \(link to 3.2.3\)](#).

Button 6: Test yourself

Before you leave the site, why not try the quiz to see how much do you really know about alcohol and drinking? See how many of the following questions you can answer correctly.

Question 1: Why does alcohol affect men and women differently?

- a) The liver breaks down alcohol more quickly in men than women
- b) Women's bodies are generally smaller and have less body water, so alcohol concentrations rise more quickly
- c) Men's stomachs are bigger so alcohol is absorbed more slowly

b) YES! Right

Sorry ladies, but you can't drink as much as men. That's not a male conspiracy theory but a biological fact! Women have less body water than men so the concentration of alcohol in their blood stream is proportionally higher. So, if a woman weighing 60 kilograms drinks a double gin then a man of the same size will need to drink a triple gin in order to reach the same blood alcohol level.

There is also some evidence that women metabolise alcohol slightly differently. There are small amounts of the enzyme ADH which is responsible for breaking down alcohol in the liver and in the lining of the stomach; and it is believed that ADH levels are lower in women and that this might contribute to their higher blood alcohol levels as alcohol is broken down more slowly.

a) & c) Sorry Wrong! Women's bodies are generally smaller and have less body water, so alcohol concentrations rise more quickly

Sorry ladies, but you can't drink as much as men. That's not a male conspiracy theory but a biological fact! Women have less body water than men so the concentration of alcohol in their blood stream is proportionally higher. So, if a woman weighing 60 kilograms drinks a double gin then a man of the same size will need to drink a triple gin in order to reach the same blood alcohol level.

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Question 2: Pregnant women are advised not to drink: why?

Pregnant women need to be extra careful about drinking alcohol. Why?

- a) Unborn babies get drunk very quickly
- b) Alcohol can harm an unborn baby in various ways
- c) Alcohol and the amniotic fluid don't mix

b) YES! Right

Alcohol can harm the unborn baby as it passes through the placenta to the fetus. . Because no safe level of drinking has been established for pregnant women then the best advice is not to drink at all.

If you drink heavily during pregnancy, then the risk of various birth defects increase significantly, these abnormalities are called FASD or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

a) & c) Sorry – Wrong! Alcohol can harm the unborn baby in various ways.

Alcohol can harm the unborn baby as it passes through the placenta to the fetus. . Because no safe level of drinking has been established for pregnant women then the best advice is not to drink at all.

If you drink heavily during pregnancy, then the risk of various birth defects increase significantly, these abnormalities are called FASD or foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Question 3: Those who persistently drink too much can become addicted to alcohol. Kicking the habit is exceptionally difficult. Why?

- a) Because alcoholics are chronically thirsty
- b) Because alcoholics drink out of habit
- c) Because alcoholics feel wretched without alcohol

c) YES! Right

There is alcohol tolerance and alcohol addiction. Toleration arises when you gradually need more and more alcohol to achieve the same effect. Addiction means that you can no longer do without alcohol. You feel have to drink. Without alcohol you feel sick and have withdrawal symptoms. You start trembling, shivering, feel nauseous or even have to vomit. Partly on account of these withdrawal symptoms it is extremely difficult to overcome addiction.

If you are worried about your own or someone else's drinking, your doctor will help you make the first steps and put you in touch with associations to help you fight the illness.

a) & b) Sorry, wrong! Alcoholics feel wretched without alcohol

There is alcohol tolerance and alcohol addiction. Tolerance arises when you gradually need more and more alcohol to achieve the same effect. Addiction means that you can no longer do without alcohol. You feel have to drink. Without alcohol you feel sick and have withdrawal symptoms. You start trembling, shivering, feel nauseous or even have to vomit. Partly on account of these withdrawal symptoms it is extremely difficult to overcome addiction.

If you are worried about your own or someone else's drinking, your doctor will help you make the first steps and put you in touch with associations to help you fight the illness.

Question 4: When should adults avoid drinking any alcohol?

- a) If they're operating machinery or working at a height
- b) If they're over 40
- c) If they're going to be a passenger in a car

a) YES! Right

In most circumstances drinking in moderation is a pleasant and relaxing thing to do and leads to no harm. There are certain occasions when you shouldn't drink, however, and these include if you work with machinery or at heights, as even small amounts of alcohol affect your coordination, reactions and judgement.

Other times you should avoid alcohol include: when planning to drive, use electrical equipment, competing at sport, while on certain medications – (ask your Doctor if you are unsure) or when pregnant.

b) & c) SORRY wrong! You shouldn't drink if operating machinery or working at heights.

In most circumstances drinking in moderation is a pleasant and relaxing thing to do and leads to no harm. There are certain occasions when you shouldn't drink, however, and these include if you work with machinery or at heights, as even small amounts of alcohol affect your coordination, reactions and judgement.

Other times you should avoid alcohol include: when planning to drive, use electrical equipment, competing at sport, while on certain medications – (ask your Doctor if you are unsure) or when pregnant.

Question 5: In a bar there's a standard glass of beer and a standard shot of whisky. Which glass contains the most alcohol?

- a) The glass of beer
- b) A shot of whisky
- c) Both contain the same amount of alcohol

c) YES! Right

Each standard glass of beer, wine and spirits contains approximately the same amount of alcohol. The alcohol by volume (ABV) of each type of drink does vary though - a beer can range from 3.5 to 8% ABV, wine varies from 10 – 14.5% and spirits are mainly 40%, (usually diluted with a mixer) – check the label to keep track of your unit intake. At home drinks poured are often larger than standard drinks.

a) & b) Sorry – wrong! Both contain the same amount of alcohol

Each standard glass of beer, wine and spirits contains approximately the same amount of alcohol. The alcohol by volume (ABV) of each type of drink does vary though - a beer can range from 3.5 to 8% ABV, wine varies from 10 – 14.5% and spirits are mainly 40%, (usually diluted with a mixer) – check the label to keep track of your unit intake. At home drinks poured are often larger than standard drinks.

Question 6: Why don't alcohol and driving mix?

- a) Because alcohol has a negative effect on your co-ordination, perception and judgment
- b) Because you run the risk of a stiff fine or losing your licence
- c) Because you run the risk of smashing up your car or injuring someone

a) YES! Right

The alcohol you drink passes through the stomach and into the small intestine, where it is absorbed into the blood-stream. From there it affects your nervous system. Alcohol affects the transmission of signals in the brain and so affects and slows down sensory perception, judgement and co-ordination.

This explains why drinking alcohol affects what you see, how you think and feel and how you move and react.

How much effect alcohol has on the body depends on the concentration – or blood alcohol concentration (BAC). This is why governments set legal BAC levels, where they deem your driving will be affected .

When you're going out, even to friends or for supper, always discuss and plan how you're getting home before you leave – or decide who will be the non drinking driver.

Of course, drinking and driving also increases the risk of fines, prison, injury to yourself and others, damage to your car and the loss of job and insurance.

b) & c) SORRY! Wrong, although answers b and c are possible consequences of drinking and driving the right answer is: Because alcohol has a negative effect on your co-ordination, perception and judgment .

The alcohol you drink passes through the stomach and into the small intestine, where it is absorbed into the blood-stream. From there it affects your nervous system. Alcohol affects the transmission of signals in the brain and so affects and slows down sensory perception, judgement. and co-ordination.

This explains why drinking alcohol affects what you see, how you think and feel and how you move and react.

How much effect alcohol has on the body depends on the concentration – or blood alcohol concentration (BAC). This is why governments set legal BAC levels, where they deem your driving will be affected .

When you're going out, even to friends or for supper, always discuss and plan how you're getting home before you leave – or decide who will be the non drinking driver.

Of course, drinking and driving also increases the risk of fines, prison, injury to yourself and others, damage to your car and the loss of job and insurance.

Question 7: What is the advised maximum intake of alcohol per day for healthy adult men and women? (glass contains 8 grams alcohol)

[✘ question to be adapted to local standard size and national guidelines]

- a) The same for men and women, three units
- b) Men three units, women two units
- c) As much as needed to quench your thirst.

b) YES! Right

Healthy adult males should drink no more than three units a day and healthy adult women should drink no more than two units a day and the World Health Organisations recommends one or two alcohol free days a week.

Men are able to drink more alcohol than women, as they have a higher volume of body fluids, less body fat and a greater ability to break down alcohol. This means that the same level of alcohol in the blood is not reached until a higher consumption of alcohol.

a) & c) SORRY! Wrong, the right answer is: Men three units, women two units

Healthy adult males should drink no more than three units a day and healthy adult women should drink no more than two units a day and the World Health Organisations recommends one or two alcohol free days a week.

Men are able to drink more alcohol than women, as they have a higher volume of body fluids, less body fat and a greater ability to break down alcohol. This means that the same level of alcohol in the blood is not reached until a higher consumption of alcohol.

Question 8: The majority of the alcohol you drink is broken down by the liver. How long does the liver take to break down the alcohol in a "unit" drink (8 grams alcohol) of an alcohol beverage?

[✘ question to be adapted to local standard size- FYI: 1 hour and a half to metabolize 10 gr]

- a) Half an hour
- b) Approximately one hour
- c) Roughly the same amount of time as you spend drinking

b.YES! Right

The liver breaks down the majority of alcohol consumed (95%), eventually into carbon dioxide and water. Your liver needs an hour to one and a half hours to neutralise a standard glass of an alcoholic drink, and there's nothing you can do to speed this up. This explains why someone who has drunk a lot the night before can still be under the influence, or 'over the limit' the following morning. The last 5% is excreted via urine, breath and perspiration.

a) & c) SORRY! wrong, the right answer is approximately one hour

The liver breaks down the majority of alcohol consumed 95%, eventually into carbon dioxide and water. Your liver needs roughly one and a half hours to neutralise a standard glass of an alcoholic drink, and there's nothing you can do to speed this up. This explains why someone who has drunk a lot the night before can still be under the influence, or 'over the

limit' the following morning. The last 5% is excreted via urine, breath and perspiration.

Question 9: What's the best way to reduce the effect of a hangover?

- a) Drink some water - it helps to rehydrate the body, but there is no cure
- b) Have a cold shower - it gets the blood moving around the body
- c) Have a strong coffee - it makes the heart pump faster to get rid of the alcohol

a) Yes right!

There is nothing you can do to speed up the break down of alcohol in your body, or sober yourself up quickly. Don't ever be tempted to think a coffee or cold shower will make you fit to drive. Alcohol is a diuretic – or makes you dehydrated, so drinking plenty of water before bed and during the evening helps your body. Water, sleep and time are the best remedy.

b) & c) Sorry – wrong! Drink some water – it helps rehydrate the body, but there is no cure.

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Question 10: The effect of alcohol differs from person to person. What does this depend on?

- a) Genetic make-up and health
- b) How strong your stomach is
- c) Whether you are very thirsty

a) YES! Right

The precise affect of alcohol varies from person to person. The amount you drink is of course an important factor, but not the only one. The difference in effect also depends on:

- ▶ Your genetic make-up and general health.
- ▶ use of legal or illegal drugs.
- ▶ Your gender, age, size and weight.
- ▶ Whether you have eaten and how quickly you have drunk your drinks
- ▶ Whether you are tired or depressed.

b) & c) SORRY! wrong, the right answer is Genetic make-up and health

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- ▶ Your genetic make-up and general health.
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- ▶ Your gender, age, size and weight.
- ▶ Whether you have eaten and how quickly you have drunk your drinks
- ▶ Whether you are tired or depressed.

Question 11: What is the most common risk associated with alcohol consumption by young people?

- a) Getting liver disease, like cirrhosis or cancer
- b) Losing weight
- c) Coming out in spots and developing a rash
- d) Going into a coma
- e) Having an accident

e) Correct! By far the most common risk you take when you drink alcohol is having an accident.

It's true that people who drink regularly over a long period of time may get liver disease (there are 25 year-olds dying from cirrhosis), and occasionally some people who really overdo it end up in a coma.

Alcohol affects your co-ordination, balance and judgement and many young people every year end up with facial injuries or broken bones – or occasionally even serious disabilities.

a) b) c) d). Wrong! By far the most common risk you take when you drink alcohol is having an accident.

It's true that people who drink regularly over a long period of time may get liver disease (there are 25 year-olds dying from cirrhosis), and some people who really overdo it end up in a coma.

Alcohol affects your co-ordination, balance and judgement and many young people every year end up with facial injuries or broken bones – or occasionally even serious disabilities.

Question 12: What is the safe limit for alcohol consumption for under 18s?

- a) One drink

- b) Two drinks
- c) Four drinks
- d) There is no safe limit

d). Correct! There is no safe limit for alcohol consumption when you're under 18.

Young people are less well equipped to cope with the effects of alcohol, physically and emotionally. Young peoples' bodies are not developed fully and are therefore more affected by alcohol than an adult's would be. However, gradual introduction to moderate drinking would be preferable at home under parental or adult supervision to prevent harm.

a) b) c) e). Wrong! There is no safe limit for alcohol consumption when you're under 18.

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Question 13: What is affected when you drink alcohol?

- a) Your body
- b) Your judgement
- c) Your behaviour
- d) Your personality
- e) Your perception

a) b) c) d) e). Whichever answer you chose, you were correct!

Drinking alcohol affects your body, your judgement, your behaviour, your personality and your perception, initially usually in a pleasant way, but this changes after a drink or two. Legal BAC levels exist for driving as your reaction times slow even after one drink, which is why you are advised not to drink while operating machinery or at heights for example

Too much alcohol can make you act out of character – for example saying things you shouldn't, acting in an embarrassing way, getting into arguments, or having unsafe sex or sex you'll later regret.

How did you do?

Score 0 –5

Oh dear, you need to brush up on your alcohol knowledge and be a bit more aware. But don't despair, the site is here to help you and has lots of useful information. Have a look at the [Alcohol and You](#) section to get you



started and if you have adolescents at home, don't forget to also read the [parents](#) section.

Score 5 –8

You're pretty aware about alcohol and drinking, but you're a bit rusty on some of the facts. You may want to brush up on your knowledge and the website has lots of useful information to help you. Have a look at the [Alcohol and You](#) section or read our [top tips](#) area. Don't forget that if you have adolescents at home to also visit the "being parents" section.

Score 8 –13

Great score - you're very alcohol aware! , although it's always useful to remind yourself of the facts. This website has lots of useful information to help you enjoy drinking responsibly and safely. If you have a family, in particular if you have adolescents at home we have some great tips in the [parents \(link\)](#) section.



Button 7: Feedback message board

✘ blog opportunity

Button 8: About us

Button 9: Contact us

Ensure that a credible source can answer questions by consumers. Most frequently asked question and answers could be reported on the website.

✘ Insert a pop-up message
that appears when consumers are leaving the site asking:
▶ Have you found the information you were looking for?
▶ Do you have suggestions?

NB:

- ▶ *This template should be read in conjunction with the Implementation Guidelines.*
- ▶ *For further information and support please contact: Carole Brigaudeau at cbrigaudeau@efrd.org*
- ▶ *To see examples of implementation of this template, please go to: www.responsibledrinking.eu*