

Covid-19 – Reducing drinking safely

Welcome to the Reducing Drinking Safely ‘Find Out More’ guide. This is a one-off information guide about how to reduce your drinking safely if having to wait for a planned alcohol detoxification due to the COVID-19 situation.

- If you are interested in knowing more, this session will help you to consider:
- Your daily alcohol pattern and calculating units of alcohol per day
- Making a plan for safe alcohol reduction
- Planning for if you need to change your brand or type of alcohol
- Some tips to help with safe alcohol reduction
- What to do if you get withdrawal symptoms from alcohol
- Where to get more information and support

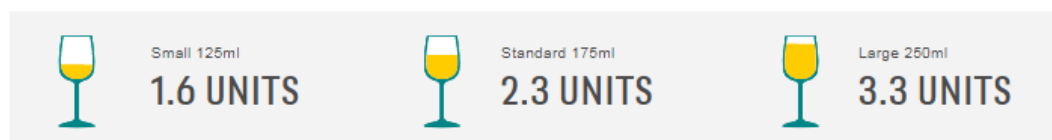
Your daily drinking pattern

to be able to plan a period of safe reduction, it is important to know how much you are drinking now. Start by writing down each drink you have and the time of day you have it. Try to measure your drinks if drinking from a bottle of spirits or wine. It is enough just to jot down what, how much and when you have a drink.

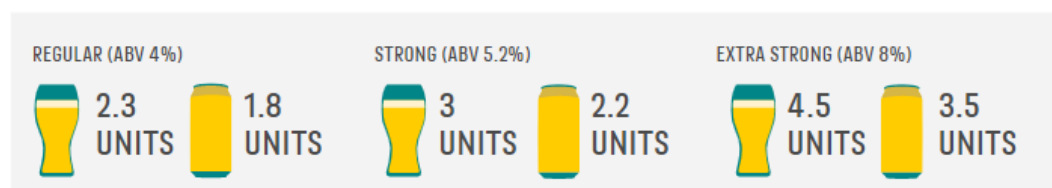
Working out your daily units

Work out how many units you are drinking per say by using this unit calculator

GLASS OF RED, WHITE OR ROSE WINE (ABV 13%)



BEER, LAGER AND CIDER

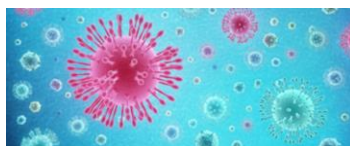


750ML BOTTLE OF RED, WHITE OR ROSE WINE (ABV 13.5%)



OTHER DRINKS





Covid-19 – Reducing drinking safely

For a few days, keep your drinking the same at the beginning and end of the day but try to space out the drinks in the middle of the day. Try adding water or a mixer to drinks or alternate between alcohol and soft drinks during the day.

Make a safe reduction plan

You can safely reduce by 10% of your units each day, or if it is easier to calculate, by 1-2 units per day.

Here are some examples of a reduction plan:

If you drinking a bottle of spirits daily (40 units) plus 4 cans of higher strength cider (16 units)

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Week 1	56	54	52	50	48	46	44
Week 2	42	40	38	36	34	32	30
Week 3	28	26	24	22	20	18	17
Week 4	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

If you are drinking 8 cans of higher strength lager daily (32 units)

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Week 1	32	30	28	26	24	22	20
Week 2	18	16	15	14	13	12	11
Week 3	10	9	8	7	6	5	4

If you are drinking 2 bottles of wine daily (20 units)

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Week 1	20	19	18	17	16	15	15
Week 2	14	13	12	10	9	9	8
Week 3	7	6	5	4	3	2	2

If you need to change your brand or type of alcohol

As we know, there have been some major temporary changes in shop opening and availability of products due to the COVID-19 government guidance. You may need to change the brand or type of alcohol you are drinking.

When you are planning your safe reduction, the most important thing is knowing **how many units** you are drinking and **reducing slowly**. Don't worry about the type or brand of alcohol – find the equivalent in units if you have to change drinks due to availability. If you need support with planning your reduction, please call your Recovery Worker or your local Turning Point office to talk through



Covid-19 – Reducing drinking safely

Some tips to help with safe alcohol reduction

- Try to eat regularly – cut down on sugar and try to eat little and often
- If you can, take thiamine three times a day
- Keep well hydrated – drink water when you can
- Get as much phone, text or on-line support as you can – from people you know, family, online forums.

What to do if you get withdrawal symptoms from alcohol

If you are reducing your drinking and notice withdrawals (usually feeling sweaty and shaky, nausea or headaches), sip some alcohol until withdrawals stop. Getting withdrawal symptoms probably means that you are cutting down too quickly and withdrawals can result in seizures (fits) and ultimately be fatal. A seizure (or fit) is marked by violent shaking and a loss of muscle control. You may black out or become confused.

It is important to get your drinking to a level where you are not getting withdrawals and keep at this level for a few days before slowly starting to reduce again. If you are concerned about withdrawals it is important to call your local Turning Point office or your GP. If you live with others, please tell them that if you experience a seizure, become confused, start to see or hear things which others cannot hear, develop double vision or become unsteady on your feet, they should call an ambulance.

Where to get more information and support

Information:

- Online resource aimed at reduction: <https://www.downyourdrink.org.uk/>
- Drinkaware: <https://drinkaware.co.uk>
- Alcohol Change UK: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>
- NHS website about alcohol misuse: www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse

Support:

- Alcoholics Anonymous online groups: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members/regional-&-localwebsites/>
- Not in a Region/Online-Groups/Meetings
- UK SMART Recovery: <https://smartrecovery.org.uk/>
- Soberistas (for women specifically): <https://soberistas.com>