

Alcohol and Young People

Alcohol can cause major problems for young people. A great deal of these problems arise as a result of drinking excessively on single occasions

Alcohol is a depressant drug meaning that it slows down the brain and, subsequently the other functions of the body. We measure our alcohol consumption in units, so the more units we drink the more our brain slows down this may lead to changes in how think, feel and behave.

What sort of changes?

2 units = increased confidence, relaxed, slowed reaction times.

4 units = increased confidence impaired judgement

More Units = Dizziness – Slurred speech – Loss of control – Staggering – Loss of memory – Sleepiness – Coma – Death



What are the risks and consequences?

Alcohol has a stronger effect on young people because of their age, smaller bodies and lack of experience with alcohol. In young people, smaller amounts of alcohol will therefore lead to higher risks

These can include:

- Aggression, arguments and fights – this could lead to a criminal record
- Unplanned and/or unprotected sex – possibility of sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy
- Other drugs – increased risk of trying other substances when drunk
- Accidents – many young people drink outside their fore can easily be knocked down or fall asleep and suffer from hypothermia
- Overdose – it's possible, particularly for young people to overdose on alcohol. Large amounts of alcohol can lead to drowsiness and /or coma with a high risk of choking on their own vomit
- Alcohol poisoning – large quantities of alcohol taken in a short space of time can lead to alcohol poisoning. More than a 1.000 young people are admitted to hospitals every year with alcohol poisoning.

THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK!

Alcohol and the body

Females have less water in their bodies than males. So, when a female's drink alcohol they have less water to dilute the alcohol, which means its more concentrated in the female body. This is one of the reasons why females get drunk quicker than males, on the same amount of alcohol.

Alcohol drinks are high in calories but have no nutrition value

There is no cure or way of sobering up – black coffee, cold showers, etc., are all myths. Time is the only thing which will make you sober. To become sober, your body needs to reduce the amount of alcohol in your bloodstream; your liver is the organ responsible for doing this but can only do this at roughly the speed of one unit per hour. There is no known way to speed this up.

A hangover is basically alcohol dehydrating the body. The only sure way to avoid a hangover is not to drink to much

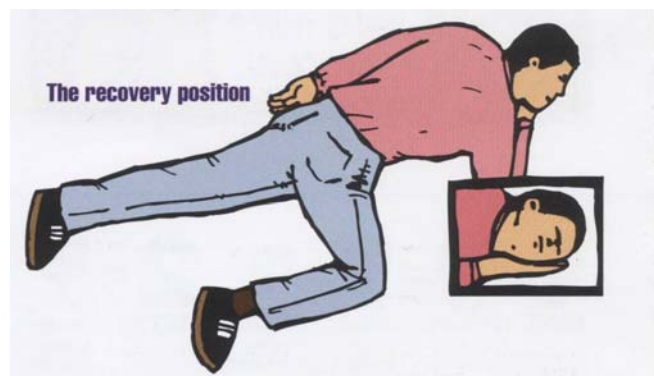
Remember – alcohol is widely used in our society and this can sometimes result in us forgetting that it is a drug. Individuals are expected to take responsibility for their drinking and their behaviour afterwards.

Essential safety information

- Never leave someone unattended who is drunk, especially if they're starting to fall asleep

If you are unable to rouse the person, you should,

- Get an adult – if no adults are available dial **999**. Don't worry about being caught drinking – people will be more interested in the life at risk.
- Turn the person on their side (recovery position) so that if they vomit, they won't choke



The laws

- The law states that it's illegal to give alcohol to a child under 5 years old
- Under 14s are allowed on licensed premises as long there's a children's certificate and the children are off the premises by 8pm
- Children ages 14 years and over are allowed in licensed premises but are not allowed to buy, be sold or have alcohol bought for them.
- A person of 16 years and over can buy beer wine and cider if served with a meal and consumed in an area solely for eating meals.
- The law permits the above but the licensee has the final say and may decide not to let anyone under the age of 18 or even 21 on their premises.
- Many local authorities also have bye laws which may, for example forbid drinking of alcohol in public places. Some Police Forces also have authority to confiscate alcohol from those under the age of 18 years.

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Taken with thanks from a leaflet issued by

