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Alcohol Awareness

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Today's Objectives

By the end of today, you will be able to:

- Understand alcohol use in Northern Ireland
- Understand the impact that alcohol can have on your physical, mental, and social health
- Identify strategies for safer and healthier alcohol use




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Today's Objectives

By the end of today, you will be able to:

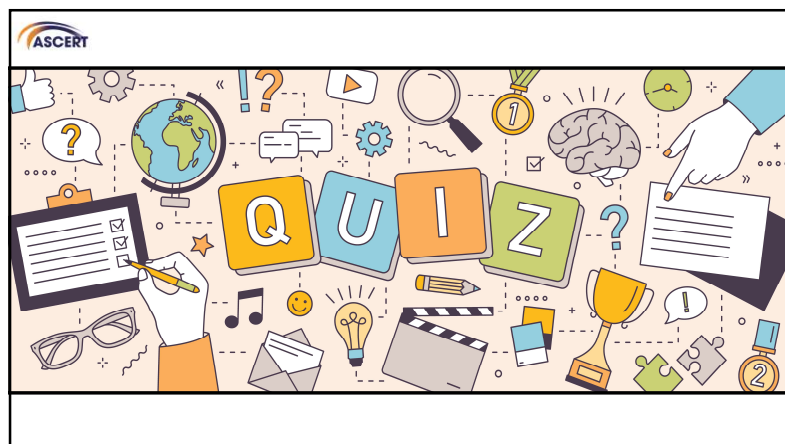
- Identify signs that you or someone you know may have a problem with alcohol
- Understand sources of support for concerning alcohol use




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1 Introduction

What do you know about alcohol use, and how prevalent is it in Northern Ireland?




 **79%**
of those aged 16+ drink alcohol; 88% have drunk at any point in their life


Increases in availability, disposable income, and targeted advertising
have influenced drinking patterns in NI over the last 20 years

Wine and beer are most commonly consumed
48% and 47%, respectively

Adults with children
are more likely to report alcohol use than adults without children




Sources: All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey 2014/15; Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland Survey 2013

 **65%**
of respondents reported reaching or exceeding the recommended daily drinking level
on at least one occasion in the week prior

18% of men and 16% of women
reached or exceeded recommended drinking levels 3+ days/week

13% of men and 10% of women
are classed as engaging in "problem drinking"

1 in 5 adults
feel they should cut down on their drinking



Sources: All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey 2014/15; Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland Survey 2013



2 Alcohol and Your Health

How can alcohol impact your health?

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Why do people use alcohol?

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Form of escapism

Boredom		Rituals
Dependency		Coping
Availability		Fun or enjoyment

Social norms and/or peer pressure


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Examples of Alcohol-Related Risks and Undesirable Effects

Physical	Social	Mental/ Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of various cancers (e.g. liver, breast) Increased risk of liver cirrhosis Dehydration → skin appearance Difficulty sleeping Weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fighting with others Anti-social/criminal behaviour (including drink driving) Job-related difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of suicide* Exacerbation of pre-existing mental health issues Mood swings

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Alcohol, Calories and Weight



- Alcohol has 7 calories/gram and no nutritional value ("empty")
- For the average adult who drinks, alcohol makes up 10% of their caloric intake
 - Not including mixers or "drunchies"

Source: National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2008 – 2010, Department of Health and Food Standards Agency


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- If you're trying to lose or maintain weight and drink alcohol, don't forget the calories in your drinks!
- Cut down on the amount you drink and swap out high calorie mixers (e.g. Coca-Cola) for lower calorie options (e.g. sparkling flavoured water)

195 cals 1 250ml glass of wine	165 cals 1 large slice of Victoria sponge	165 cals 1 double vodka and tonic	1 large doughnut
280 cals 1 Pina Colada	180 cals 2 puff pastry sausage rolls	180 cals 1 pint of beer	4 Jaffa cakes
380 cals 2 glasses of champagne	175 cals 1 large slice of chocolate cake	175 cals 1 bottle of alcopop	1 slice of pizza

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Drink Driving




- Alcohol negatively impacts judgement, reaction time, and coordination → increased risk of accidents
- Drink driving limits
 - 35 micrograms of alcohol/100mL of breath
 - 80 milligrams of alcohol/100mL of blood
 - 107 milligrams of alcohol/100mL of urine
- You might not be fit to drive the next morning!

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Drink Driving: Possible Penalties

In Charge of a Vehicle While Unfit Through Drink/Drugs	Driving (or Attempting) While Unfit Through Drink/Drugs	Causing Death or GBH by Driving Under the Influence of Drink/Drugs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 months' imprisonment ○ Fine up to £2500 ○ Possible driving ban (length decided by District Judge) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 months' imprisonment ○ Fine up to £5000 ○ Driving ban for at least 12 months (or 3 years*) ○ Driving test before your license is returned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 14 years' imprisonment ○ Unlimited fine ○ Driving ban for at least 2 years ○ Extended driving test before your license is returned

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Drinkaware: Alcohol and Mental Health

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Alcohol and Mental Health

- Alcohol alters neurotransmitter levels
 - Decrease: glutamate → slows everything down and can enhance feelings of depression and anxiety
 - Increase: GABA and dopamine → can make you feel better for awhile but can also make you want to drink more → risk of addiction
- Alcohol use and mental ill health can become cyclic
 - Drinking may lessen feelings of stress/anxiety/depression in the short term → repeated/heavy alcohol use begins to increase bad feelings → drink to attempt to relieve bad feelings

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Alcohol and Health: Coronavirus

- Coping, boredom, lack of daily structure → increased alcohol use for some people during pandemic
- Drinkaware Monitor 2020 found increased alcohol use in people who:
 - Had questionable job security
 - Felt that the pandemic had a large or moderate impact on their mental health
 - Began working from home for the first time



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3 Guidance Around Alcohol

How should alcohol be used?

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Alcohol: Guidance for Adult Men and Women

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Alcohol units = Drink volume in mL x ABV

1000

 $568 \text{ mL} \times 4.2\% \text{ ABV} = 2.4 \text{ units}$ ----- 1000	 $35 \text{ mL} \times 40\% \text{ ABV} = 1.4 \text{ units}$ ----- 1000
 $175 \text{ mL} \times 13.5\% \text{ ABV} = 2.4 \text{ units}$ ----- 1000	 $450 \text{ mL} \times 13.5\% \text{ ABV} = 6.1 \text{ units}$ ----- 1000


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Binge drinking usually refers to drinking lots of alcohol in a short space of time or drinking to get drunk. In the UK, binge drinking is drinking more than **8** units in a single session for **men** or **6** units in a single session for **women**.

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NHS

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 **Guidance: Adult Women**



- Why does alcohol affect women more than men?
 - Less dehydrogenase → higher BAC
 - Hormones
 - Women experience higher BACs (drinking their regular amount of alcohol) right before menstruation
 - Women tend to have a higher percentage of body fat/lower percentage of water

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 **Guidance: Pregnant Women**


- Pregnant women and women actively trying to get pregnant shouldn't drink
- Alcohol can affect a developing foetus
 - Increased risk of miscarriage and stillbirth
 - First 3 months of pregnancy → facial abnormalities
 - Anytime during pregnancy → issues with growth/birth weight and Central Nervous system abnormalities
 - Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders



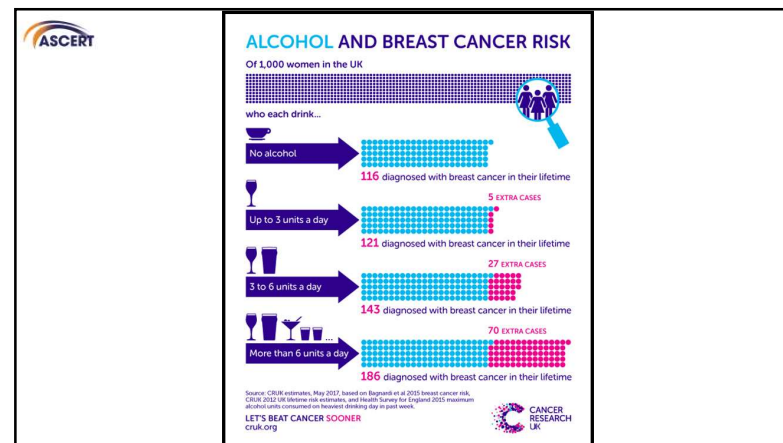
A child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (O'Flaherty 1996)

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Guidance: Post-Menopausal Women



- Alcohol affects post-menopausal women more significantly due to hormonal changes + the general impact of aging (e.g. decreased body water volume)
- Impact on menopause symptoms
 - May worsen symptoms for some people
 - Increased risk of depression can be made worse by alcohol
- Alcohol can interact with medications (e.g. oestrogen) – speak with your GP



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Healthier Habits: Staying Safe While Drinking

- Know your limits
- Stay with people you know/trust, especially in unfamiliar environments
- Avoid unnecessary risks (e.g. swimming, driving)
- Keep an eye on your drink
- Avoid mixing with other substances
- Be aware of the signs of alcohol poisoning
 - Passing out; nausea/vomiting; confusion; loss of bowel and bladder control; impaired breathing/swallowing

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Healthier Habits: Cutting Down and Drinking Mindfully

- Measure your pours
- Try to have at least 2–3 drink-free days
 - On drinking days, plan an “allowance” (units are a maximum, not a target!)
- Go for low- or no-alcohol alternatives (“mocktails”)
- Use smaller glasses
- Identify and act on drinking triggers
 - HALT
- Seek support if necessary



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4 Problems With Alcohol and Sources of Support

What are some potential signs that you may have a problem with alcohol, and where can you get help?

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Problems with Alcohol: Warning Signs

<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequent hangovers ○ Frequent overdrinking leading to sickness and/or memory loss ○ Frequent accidents/injuries while under the influence ○ Tolerance ○ Experiencing withdrawal symptoms (e.g. shaking, sweating, nausea, anxiety) 	<p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alcohol-related problems with relationships (e.g. fighting) ○ Regularly using alcohol for confidence, even in inappropriate settings ○ Hiding drink from friends/family ○ Friends/family have brought up your drinking/associated consequences
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Problems with Alcohol: Warning Signs

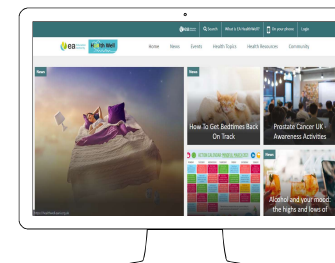
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased feelings of anger, sadness, and/or anxiety ○ Experiencing mood swings ○ Feeling you need to drink in order to feel good/avoid feeling bad ○ Feeling guilty or disgusted by your drinking 	<p>Behavioural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using alcohol as a coping strategy ○ Drinking more frequently and/or earlier in the day ○ Neglecting other responsibilities in favour of drinking, or drinking at inappropriate times ○ Regularly engaging in risky behaviour while drinking ○ Continuing to drink despite harmful consequences
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EA Health Well

EA's health and wellbeing site for staff

<https://healthwell.eani.org.uk>



 **EA Resources**




- EA Health and Wellbeing Team
 - healthandwellbeing@eani.org.uk; 02890 418 023
- Occupational Health
 - peopleservices@eani.org.uk
- Disability Employment Support Service (DESS; reasonable adjustments)
 - equality.unit@eani.org.uk

 **EA Resources**

- EA Mental Health First Aiders (peer support and signposting)
 - Directory on Health Well site
 - anne.rath@eani.org.uk
- Inspire Workplaces
 - Counselling services (24/7/365) – 0800 389 5362
 - Support hub – inspiresupporthub.org



 **Appendix to Circular No. 299**

WORKPLACE ALCOHOL POLICY

1.* INTRODUCTION

The Education and Library Board has adopted this positive policy designed to encourage early identification of alcohol related problems and so providing the Board with a constructive and preventative strategy regarding alcohol problems amongst it's employees.

Alcohol problems can affect an individual's health and wellbeing and cause a wide range of social problems. This Policy is concerned primarily with the effects of alcohol problems on the job performance and career prospects of the Board's employees.


The Alcohol Policy has four main objectives:


- 1.* To retain employees;
- 2.* To encourage employees with alcohol problems to seek help;
- 3.* To refer employees for help;
- 4.* To restore health and productivity.

The policy is intended to:

- 1.1* reduce and help prevent the incidence of alcohol related work impairment;
- 1.2* reduce the personal suffering of employees with drink problems and also the consequential effects on colleagues'.

EA Alcohol Policy (Teaching and Non-Teaching)

 **Some Community/Voluntary Support Organisations**



- ASCERT (info@ascert.biz; 0800 2545 123)
- Addiction NI (enquiries@addictionni.com; 02890 0664 434)
- Extern (extern.org/contact; 02890 840 555)
- Start360 (info@start360.org; 07923 129 559)
- Dunlewey Addiction Services (admin@dunlewey.org; 02890 392 547)

