



THE DANGERS OF TEEN ALCOHOL ABUSE



Drinking alcohol is a feature of many social occasions, weddings, funerals, birthdays, barbeques, nights out with mates or just chilling out at home in front of the TV. Cheaper alcohol, clever marketing and changed attitudes have fostered a culture in which regular drinking to excess are seen as the norm.

Growing up in such a pro-alcohol environment, it's not surprising that young people under 18 drink. It sometimes seems to be expected. Experimenting with alcohol in adolescence is widely thought of as a 'rite of passage' and getting drunk a phase that a lot of people will go through.



Concern is expressed about young people's drinking, but there is a tendency to focus on the anti-social aspects of heavy drinking. Evidence suggests we should pay more attention to the health risks. Drinking during adolescence can have a range of negative impacts on health and well-being, with potentially serious and

long lasting consequences.

Alcohol's physical and psychological effects

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with intoxicating effects. It can alter a users' mental state, increasing impulsivity, impairing judgement, and affecting balance and movement.

Repeated exposure to alcohol is toxic to human cells and tissue. Alcohol has the potential to adversely affect nearly every organ and system of the body including poisoning. Chronic effects include cancer and liver cirrhosis.

Alcohol is a drug of dependence. Symptoms of dependence include difficulty in controlling drinking behaviour and continuing to drink despite clear signs of harmful consumption.

Alcohol use in adolescence is a risk factor for poor mental health

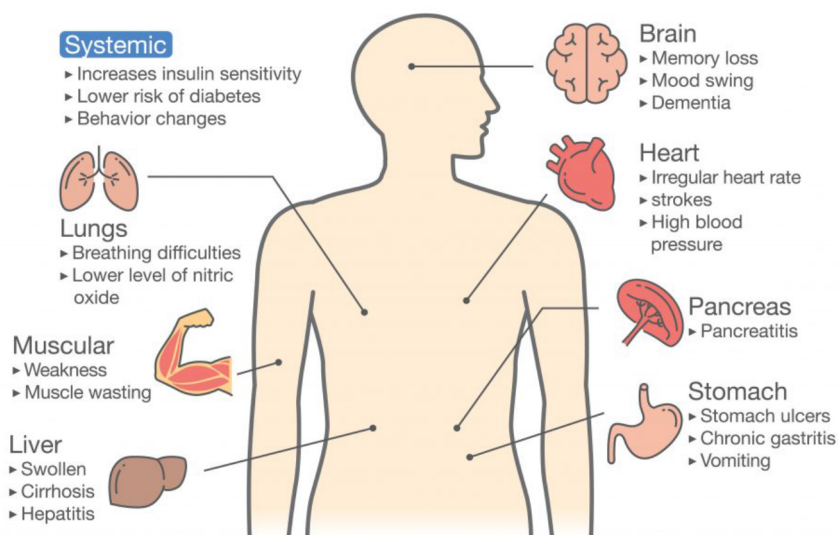
A large proportion of adult mental health disorders start in adolescence. Risky heavy episodic drinking is associated with a range of psychiatric symptoms, including conduct and behaviour problems, anxiety and depression.

Alcohol use has been identified as a risk factor for self-harming during the transition from late adolescence to adulthood. And adolescents who drink whilst feeling sad or depressed have an increased risk of attempting suicide.

Evidence suggests a reciprocal relationship between alcohol use and mental health. Alcohol may be used to cope with negative feelings, and heavy alcohol use may precipitate psychiatric distress.

As drinking often starts in adolescence, a time of significant emotional and biological change, alcohol use in adolescence may have a critical impact on mental well-being.

Symptoms of Alcoholism



The human brain reaches approximately 90% of adult volume by the age of 6, but continues a process of structural change until the early 20s. The prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for decision-making and impulse control, is one of the last areas to fully mature. Evidence suggests the adolescence brain is particularly susceptible to the effects of alcohol.

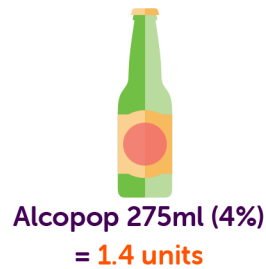
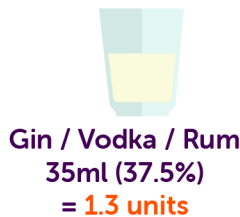
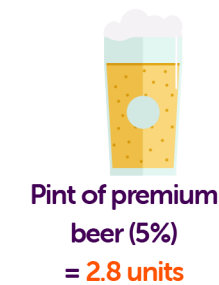


What are the recommended limits of alcohol?

The government's unit guidelines state that there's **no safe level of alcohol consumption**. Unit guidelines are the same for men and women and both are advised **not** to regularly drink more than 14 units per week.

If you're pregnant you shouldn't drink alcohol at all

ALCOHOL UNITS GUIDE



This is what 14 units look like:

6 pints of 4% beer



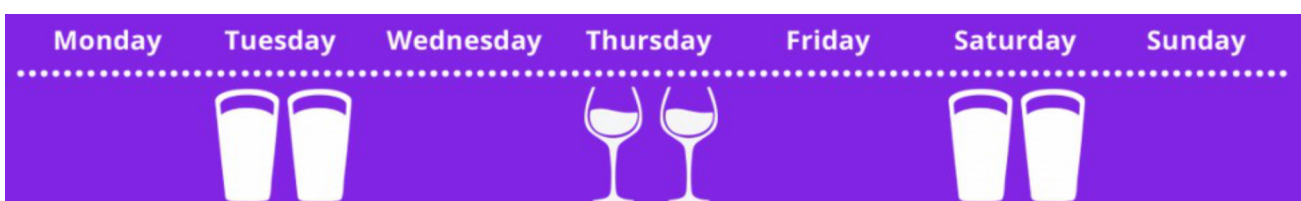
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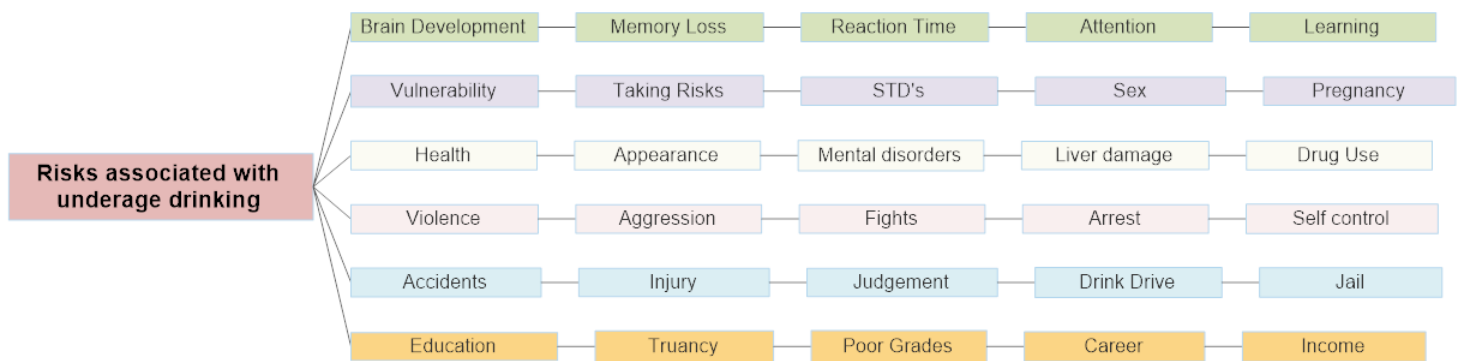


6 glasses of 13% wine

Never save up your units for a 'BIG NIGHT OUT'

Best to spread across days and have regular drink-free days.





DRINK PROBLEM?

If you think you have a problem with drinking, we're here to help.



Alcoholics Anonymous

Tel: 028-90351222



To watch the video either:

- Click on the video image
- Scan QR code with a smart phone
- Type URL into browser

www.vimeo.com/284943858



Contact:

- **Support email:** pcoghlan@nmea.net
- **Support line:** 07955580542 Mon-Fri 3-5pm
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/work4Uplus
- **Web:** www.work4uplus.com
- **Online support groups via Zoom**
- Email pcoghlan@nmea.net to register

