

Higher risk drinking

At this level of drinking you are likely to be suffering some harm from your drinking. You are now 3-5 times more likely to get cancer of the mouth, and as much as 10 times more likely to have liver cirrhosis. You may have high blood pressure.

You are more likely to get all the problems that start to come with higher risk drinking and for them to be more serious. You may also be spending more money on alcohol than you can afford and alcohol may be affecting your family and work. You will almost certainly be less fit and active than you would be without drinking. Drinking at this level in the long term is very likely to harm you.

Increasing beyond higher risk drinking moves you towards being physically dependent on alcohol and certain harm.

Cutting down or stopping

If you are at increased risk or higher risk you should think about cutting down or stopping. You may need to stop if you have a health problem or have blackouts while drinking. If you have physical withdrawal symptoms (like shaking, sweating or feeling anxious until you have your first drink of the day) you are probably physically dependant on alcohol. It may be dangerous for you to stop completely and you may need some medical help – see the getting help section of this leaflet.

If you are pregnant, or want to become pregnant, you should think about cutting down or stopping drinking altogether. For men, drinking may affect your ability to father children.



Getting help or more information

Cutting down or stopping won't necessarily be easy, but there is a lot of help out there and lots of people have succeeded.

Alcohol is a big subject to cover in this small leaflet and you might want some more information on units, the risks of drinking or ways of cutting down. Here are some places you can get help.

Phone line

Ring Drinkline on **0800 917 8282**

Website

National NHS website giving more detail on units and ways of cutting down:

www.nhs.uk/livewell/alcohol

Local information is available at:

www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/health-and-well-being/drugs-and-alcohol-health-advice/

www.humber.nhs.uk/services/health-trainers-east-riding.htm

Talk to your GP, or;

Contact the East Riding Open Access Service for local help and advice available on drinking **(01482) 344690**

For more information on alcohol and pregnancy visit:

www.nhs.uk/change4life/pages/pregnancy-and-alcohol.aspx#womenTrying



DO I DRINK TOO MUCH?



 **EAST RIDING**
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL


East Riding of Yorkshire

Introduction

For many of us, drinking with friends and family is one of life's pleasures. But for a lot of people their drinking can lead to longer term health problems, increasing your chances of getting over 60 different health problems, including cancer, high blood pressure, having a stroke and excess weight.

Because drinks come in different strengths and quantities the usual way to measure the strength is in units.

Here is a guide to the number of units in common drinks:

Drink	% alcohol	Units
Average pint of lager or beer	4%	2.3
750 ml bottle of wine	13.5%	10
Pub double of spirits	40%	2
275 ml alco-pop	5%	1.4

This is a guide – some drinks can be stronger, bottle sizes vary and remember if you are drinking at home it is harder to keep count of how many drinks you have had and how big they are.

The risks of drinking go up with the amount you drink. If you know how many units you are drinking you can assess the risks. Which category are you in?

The evidence is that 35,000 people in the East Riding may drink at levels that put them at risk and 10,000 may be physically dependant on alcohol – that is a lot of ordinary people, including a growing number over 45.

Remember that the more you drink the more you could damage your health, no matter what category you are in and it is easy to slip into the next risk category without even noticing.

Risk	Men	Women
Lower risk	Fewer than 3-4 units a day on a regular basis	Fewer than 2-3 units a day on a regular basis
Example of lower risk drinking	1 and a half pints of lager at 4% = 3.5 units	1 medium glass of wine (150 ml) = 2 units
Increasing risk	More than 3-4 units a day on a regular basis	More than 2-3 units a day on a regular basis
Example of increasing risk drinking	2 large (250 ml) glasses of wine = 6.6 units	A medium glass of wine and 2 alcopops = 4.8 units
Higher risk	More than 8 units a day on a regular basis	More than 6 units a day on a regular basis
Example of higher risk drinking	Four pints of beer = 9.2 units	2 gin and tonics and a large glass (250 ml) of wine = 8.6 units

If you can work out which category you are in you can look at the risks and decide if it is worth cutting down.

Alcohol causes or makes over 60 medical conditions worse, it costs money, damages families and causes violence and road accidents. As a society we seem to take a much more relaxed view of alcohol than other drugs, most of which we have made illegal. Alcohol on the other hand is easily available, legal, socially acceptable and relatively inexpensive.

Lower risk drinking

It is called lower risk drinking because drinking is never completely safe, but if you are in this category and there is no special reason to reduce drinking - carry on, but be aware of how much you drink – it is easy to move up the risk categories.

Increasing risk drinking

Alcohol affects all parts of your body and it can play a part in more than 60 medical conditions. For example you are at greater risk of cancer of the mouth, breast cancer, cirrhosis of the liver and high blood pressure.

In addition, if you regularly drink at a level that places you at increasing risk you might already have experienced problems like feeling tired or depressed, gaining weight, memory loss, sleeping poorly and sexual problems.

At this level of drinking you should think about cutting down, and be concerned that you could slip into the higher risk category.

