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# Alcohol and You

A self help guide

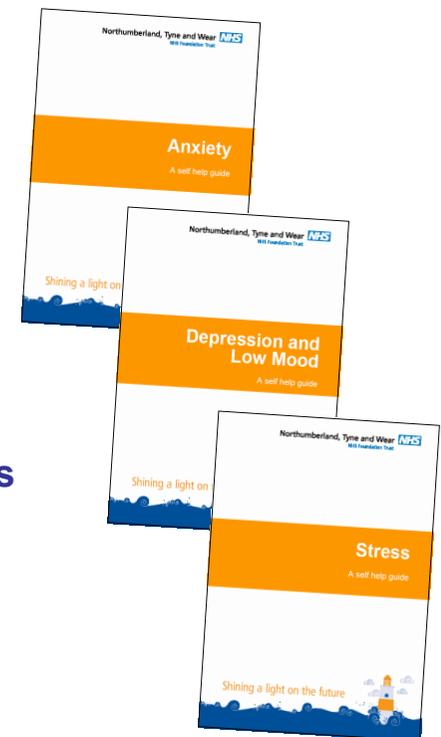
Shining a light on the future



# Mental Health Self Help Guides

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## Membership Application Form

### Your information

Mr  Mrs  Miss  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(please specify)

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like us to contact you?

Post  Email

### About You

We are required to collect the following information about our members.

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Male  Female

Are you: White   
Mixed   
Asian or Asian British   
Black or Black British   
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed form to Freepost NTW,  
Cherry Knowle Hospital, Ryhope, Sunderland SR2 0NB

## You may be interested in this booklet if...

- You want to know more about drinking alcohol
- You are interested in what the current guidelines for safe limits are
- You think you may have a problem with your drinking
- People have told you that you have a drink problem
- You are worried about someone else's drinking

## What will this booklet do?

- Give you more information about different types of drinking
- Help you recognise your own pattern of drinking
- Help you decide what kind of drinker you are
- Describe how you might change if you want to
- Suggest how you might get further help

## 1. How do people use alcohol?

Most people in Britain drink alcohol. But different people use alcohol in different ways. These are some of the typical ways people use alcohol.

## Which of these people are you most like, in the way you use alcohol?

Wayne enjoys a pint a couple of times a week. He tends to do this either with his mates at their local pub, in the evening, or at family celebrations such as birthday parties. He and his partner like to organise a baby sitter once in a while and treat themselves to a meal with wine at a restaurant. It is the company of his friends and family that Wayne enjoys. He's not that bothered about the alcohol, although he enjoys it when he does have a drink.

If you are like Wayne then probably you are what health guidelines call a Sensible Drinker. If you are otherwise in good health, then the alcohol you drink should cause you no harm. But you may still find this booklet helpful to you. You will be able to check that you really are a sensible drinker. It will also help you understand how and why you should continue to drink sensibly.

Gemma likes to go out with her friends about twice a week. She usually just has one or two drinks but sometimes finds she drinks a little more than this. This tends to happen when she

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drinks with her friends in rounds or during “happy hour” when the drinks are cheaper. She does not feel she drinks too much. She accepts the occasional hangover without concern. Recently, she has started having a glass of wine at home most evenings.

If you are like Gemma then you might be surprised that you are what health guidelines call a Hazardous Drinker. This means that while you are unlikely to be actually causing harm to yourself right now, you are putting yourself at risk. Your drinking is hazardous because you are putting yourself at risk of having an accident or having serious health problems in the long run. A hazard is an accident waiting to happen! In fact, if you drink like Gemma, then probably there are days when you feel tired or hung-over because of the way you use alcohol. If you are a Hazardous Drinker, then using this booklet will help you return to being a Sensible Drinker. You will then avoid the long-term risks to your health that too much alcohol can cause.

John likes to have a drink on a regular basis. He goes to the pub most nights and has at least 3 to 4 pints. Recently he has been having arguments

with his partner. She is not happy, both with the amount of time he spends in the pub and the amount of money he spends when he's in there. Also, recently, he has had to take time off work when he has been hung-over the following day. He is now finding it difficult to fall asleep unless he has had a drink. He also finds he has to drink more to get the same effect he once had from smaller amounts. His partner thinks he has a problem and that it is getting worse, and it continues to be a source of arguments.

If you are like John then you could be damaging your health right now. Probably, you are drinking more alcohol than your body can cope with. If that is the case, then you are what health guidelines call a Harmful Drinker. You may not notice any effects at the moment, but over time your body will have more and more difficulty dealing with the alcohol you are drinking. Your health will suffer. It might even be, looking back to how you used to be when you drank less than you do now, that you do notice some differences. You may feel bloated or have 'tummy troubles'. Perhaps you don't feel as energetic as you used to. You may not sleep as well or wake feeling as rested. Possibly you feel less happy, even low in

## Recommended reading

- **Overcoming problem drinking**

Marcantonio Spada

Robinson Publishing 2006

A self-help book aimed specifically at problem drinking uses an approach based on real clinical practice, first to recognize alcohol misuse and then, using proven Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques, to show the drinker how to turn the tables and regain control of alcohol consumption.

- **Allen Carr's easy way to control alcohol**

Allen Carr

Arcturus Publishing 2009

A book that offers the solution to anyone who sincerely wants to turn their back on a problem that ruins lives, tears families apart, fuels crime and costs the economy billions of pounds every year.

Provides advocacy, training and helpline services to those suffering from alcohol or drug dependency.

- **Turning Point**

Tel: 020 7481 7600

[www.turning-point.co.uk](http://www.turning-point.co.uk)

Standon House, 21 Mansell Street, London, E1 8AA

Provides specialist services for people affected by alcohol, drugs and mental health problems.

mood some days. If this sounds like you, then you should use this booklet to help you cut down both how much and how often you drink. You'll be surprised how much better you feel if you do.

Mary feels she needs to drink every day. If she does not have a drink she suffers from shaking, feeling sick, feeling anxious and sweating. She recently lost her job due to her drinking and can only afford to drink the cheapest brands. She drinks up to four litres of strong cider a day. She has tried putting her first drink of the day off for as long as possible, but now finds it is getting earlier each day and is sometimes as soon as she gets up. She thinks she is drinking too much and would like to change but feels afraid of the feelings she has when she tries to cut down. She knows she needs to talk to someone about her drinking and has thought of making an appointment to see her doctor, but hasn't yet done so.

If you are like Mary then you may find it difficult to stop drinking alcohol. You may begin to feel more unwell if you don't drink than if you do. If that is the case then you could be what health guidelines call a Dependent Drinker.

If you believe that you are dependent on alcohol then it is very important that you see your Doctor before you stop drinking.

Even if you are a Dependent Drinker, don't worry. There is help available. You can find out how to get the help from this booklet.

But let's not jump to conclusions! Before you finally decide what sort of drinker you think you are, read more of this booklet and do one or two of the exercises. Only then can you be clear what type of drinker you are. More importantly, you'll discover what you want to do about it and what you can do.

## 2. What is alcohol?

Before we go any further, let's be clear about what alcohol is. Alcohol itself is a colourless chemical. It can be made from almost anything that has sugar in it. For example, beer is made from barley, cider from apples, wine from grapes, whiskey from grain, and vodka from potatoes. Depending on what they are made from, and how they are made, different drinks have different amounts of alcohol in them. Beer and cider can

- **NHS Choices – Your health, your choices**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
Information about conditions, treatments, local services and healthy lives.
- **NHS Direct**  
Tel: 0845 46 47  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)  
Health information and advice.
- **PALS – Patient Advice and Liaison Service**  
[www.pals.nhs.uk](http://www.pals.nhs.uk)  
Provides information and advice about local NHS services and support organisations and helps sort out any problems with NHS services.
- **Rethink**  
Helpline: 0845 456 0455  
[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)  
89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP  
Provides information and a helpline for anyone affected by mental health problems.
- **The Alliance**  
Helpline: 0845 122 8608  
[www.m-alliance.org.uk](http://www.m-alliance.org.uk)  
32 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3QJ

- **Mind Infoline**

Tel: 08457 660 163

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

15 -19 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 4BQ

Provides information on a range of topics including types of mental distress, where to get help, drug and alternative treatments and advocacy. Also provides details of help and support for people in their own area.

Helpline available Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm.

- **National Association for Children of Alcoholics**

Helpline: 0800 358 3456

[www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)

PO Box 64, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2UH

Addresses the problems faced by children growing up in families where one or both parents are alcoholics or have a similar addictive problem.

- **NHS Choices**

[www.drinking.nhs.uk](http://www.drinking.nhs.uk)

Promotes awareness of the risks of alcohol, and advice on how to cut down alcohol intake.

be 2% to 7% alcohol; wines 9% to 15%; and spirits, like whiskey and vodka, are often 40% alcohol. These percentages are 'Alcohol By Volume'. On bottles you may see this shortened to 'ABV' next to the percentage number.

Alcohol is also measured in units. More and more drinks are labelled with the units of alcohol they have in them. Here are some examples of the typical number of units of alcohol in different drinks.



Alcohol also contains calories. There are about 55 calories in every unit of pure alcohol. But remember, drinks have other ingredients besides alcohol and they will add to the calorie count! The table below shows roughly how many calories are in some popular drinks and mixes.

How many calories in...?	Kcals	Measure
<b>Beer and Lager</b>		
Beer – canned and draught bitter	90	½ pint
Beer – Lager (ordinary 3-4% ABV)	80-85	½ pint
Beer – Lager (premium 5% ABV)	90	½ pint
Beer – Draught Mild bitter	70	½ pint
Beer – Brown ale	80	
Beer – Bottled Stout	105	
Cider – Dry	95	½ pint
Cider – Sweet	110	½ pint
<b>Wine</b>		
Dry white wine	85	125ml
Medium white wine	95	125ml
Sweet white wine	120	125ml
Sparkling white wine (Champagne, Cava )	95	125ml
Rose wine, medium	90	125ml
Red wine	85	125ml
<b>Spirits 50 ml = pub double</b>		
Whisky, gin, vodka etc.	120	50ml
Premium whisky, gin, vodka	140	50ml
Liqueurs, brandy	150	50ml

Provides information and resources on alcohol, the dangers of drinking and tips to cut down intake.

- **Drinkline**

Helpline: 0800 917 8282

Offers services including information and self help materials, help to callers worried about their own drinking and support to families and carers of people who are drinking.

- **Frank – Alcohol/Drug Information for young people**

Tel: 0800 77 66 00

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Advice and information about drugs.

- **Mental Health Matters**

Tel: 0191 516 3500

[www.mentalhealthmatters.com](http://www.mentalhealthmatters.com)

Avalon House, St Catherines Court, Sunderland Enterprise Park, Sunderland SR5 3XJ

A national organisation which provides support and information on employment, housing, community support and psychological services.

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy**  
 Tel: 01455 883 316  
[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)  
 BACP House, 15 St John's Business Park,  
 Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4HB  
 Offers an information service providing  
 contacts for counselling in England and Wales.
- Down your drink**  
[www.downyourdrink.org.uk](http://www.downyourdrink.org.uk)  
 This site is designed to help you work out  
 whether you're drinking too much, and if so,  
 what you can do about it.
- DrugScope**  
 Tel: 020 7520 7550  
[www.drugscope.org.uk](http://www.drugscope.org.uk)  
 Prince Consort House, Suite 204 (2nd Floor),  
 109/111 Farringdon Road, London, EC1R 3BW  
 Database of local drug and alcohol treatments  
 and services across the UK.
- Drinkaware**  
 Tel: 020 7307 7450  
[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)  
 7 - 10 Chandos Street, London, W1G 9DQ

<b>Mixer</b>		
Tonic water	40	100ml
Cola	45	100ml
Caffeine based energy drink	45	100ml
Can of (slimline/diet) Tonic, cola etc	0	100ml

**What drinks do you usually have?**

**How much of it do you usually drink on days when you are drinking?**

**So how many units of alcohol do you usually have when you are drinking alcohol?**

Alcohol stays longer in women's bodies than men's. So women should drink less alcohol than men.

If you are a woman, then you are increasing the risks to your health if you regularly drink 3 or more units a day. If you are pregnant, you really shouldn't be drinking alcohol at all.

If you are a man, then you are increasing the risks to your health if you regularly drink 4 or more units a day.

If you are drinking close to your limit, then two or three alcohol-free days a week will keep you safer.

### 3. What does alcohol do?

Alcohol dissolves quickly in the blood stream and affects your judgement. You may do things you wouldn't do if you hadn't drunk alcohol, and some of these things you may later regret. It can cause unsteadiness and loss of balance, slurred speech, and blurred vision. It can even lead to unconsciousness and death.

The reason why you shouldn't drive or operate machinery after drinking alcohol is because it affects your judgement. It also affects your co-ordination – that is, your ability to control your

## Useful Contacts:

- **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Helpline: 0845 769 7555

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ

Information, advice and support to help people recover from alcoholism.

- **Alcohol Concern**

Tel: 0207 264 0510

[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

64 Lemn Street, London, E1 8EU

Works to reduce alcohol-related harm and to increase the range and quality of services available to people with alcohol-related problems.

- **AL-Anon Family Groups UK and Eire**

Tel: 020 7403 0888 10am - 10pm

[www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

Email: [alanonuk@aol.com](mailto:alanonuk@aol.com)

61 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YF

Helps families and friends of alcoholics recover from the effects of living with those with drinking problems.

**Write it down, and plan how you will deal with that situation, thought, or feeling next time.** That way, you can try to avoid similar set-backs in the future.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Set-backs are a normal part of life. Remember that living life with much less alcohol than you used to use, or even without any alcohol at all, involves learning new habits. So for a time it's easy to slip back into old habits. If you slip back remember the goals you set yourself for your drinking and try again. Read through this booklet again to remind yourself. Given time, your new ways of behaving will become old, settled habits themselves.

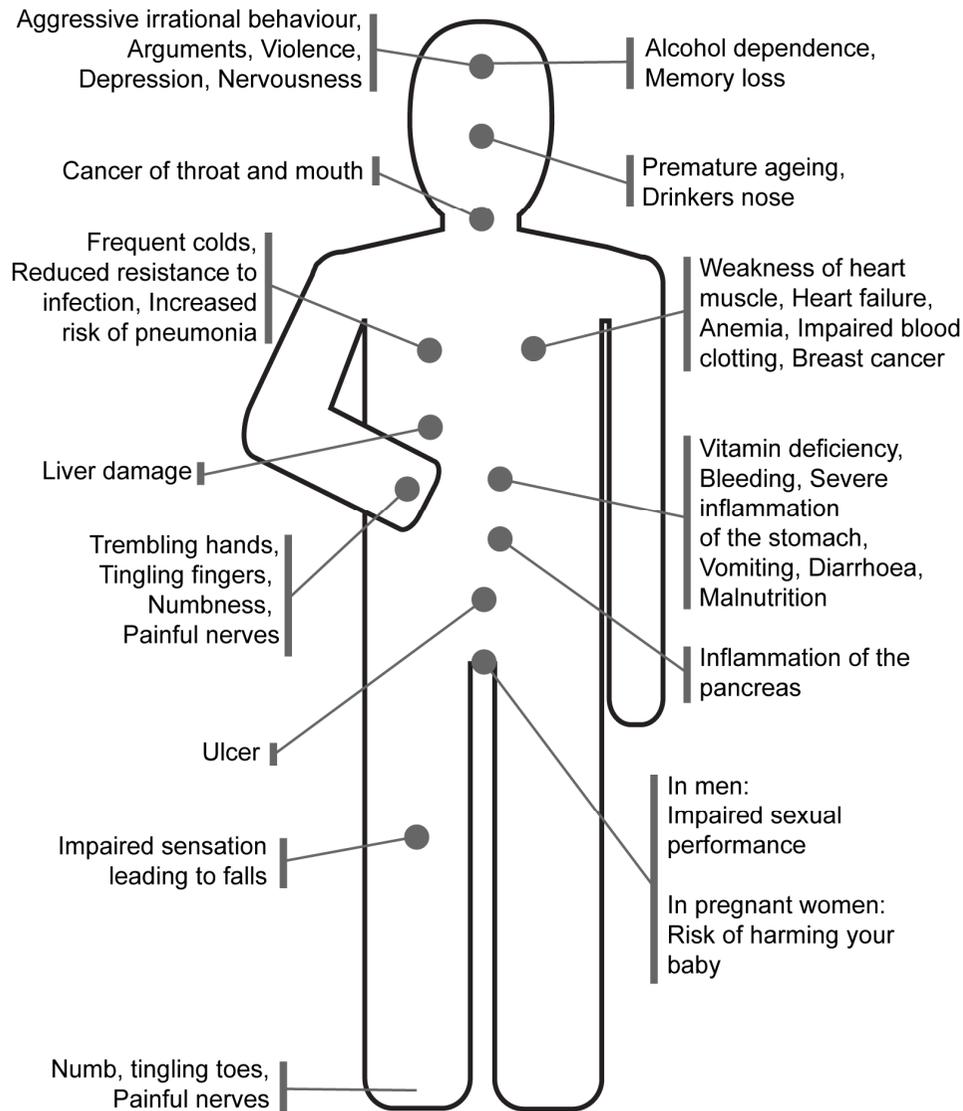
In moments of doubt just answer this question:

**Do you want to control alcohol or do you want alcohol to control you?**

body, and your reaction time slows down. It often does all this without you realising that it is affecting you in these ways.

Your body treats alcohol as a poison. It works hard to get rid of it. But it takes a healthy liver about one hour to get rid of 1 unit of alcohol. Fresh air, black coffee, and cold showers won't help to get alcohol out of your system.

## Effects of alcohol misuse



### Remember:

If you believe that you are dependent on alcohol, then it is very important that you see your Doctor before you stop drinking. However with the right kind of help, anybody can come off alcohol safely!

## 9. What about setbacks?

You might not have any set-backs! But if you do have a set-back it is important not to give up on the goals you have set yourself.

A set-back can also be a good thing. It can be something you can learn from. So if you do have a set-back, think about it afterwards. Was it a difficult situation you found yourself in? Was it something you were thinking about that caused you to feel bad or feel over-confident? What was it that caused you to have the set-back?

- Very tense and agitated, being unable to settle down or do anything.
- Feeling very confused, not knowing the time, or where you are and having a very poor short-term memory so that you cannot recall what happened recently.
- Hallucinating: you may just 'sense' that bad things are happening, or you may actually see or hear things that aren't there; typically, people in this state 'see' spiders, rats or snakes.
- You may suffer 'fits', during which you lose control of your body, collapse, and become unconscious.

These are symptoms of physical withdrawal from alcohol. The symptoms are very dangerous. They can be fatal. They can also lead to permanent brain damage. The very heavy drinker can be left with no ability to lay down new memories. It is a type of dementia specifically associated with very heavy drinking. It is caused by a lack of Thiamine, which is a type of Vitamin B needed by the brain to make new memories.

Regularly drinking large amounts of alcohol increases the risk of serious illnesses. These include: inflammation of the pancreas; stomach ulcers; liver disease, including cancer; cancers of the mouth, throat and breast; and brain damage.

It can also cause (and will certainly make worse) any mental health problems, such as depression. Drinking large amounts of alcohol can also lead to personal and social problems.

#### **4. What kind of drinker are you?**

To find out what kind of drinker you are, think about the amount of alcohol you drink and also the pattern of your drinking. The pattern of your drinking is made up of the times when you drink alcohol and the times when you do not, and who you drink alcohol with.

Think about how you used alcohol in the last week. Now fill out the diary. Perhaps you cannot remember exactly what you had to drink last week, or when. In that case, keep a diary in the coming week. Each day, record on the sheet where, what, why and with whom you were drinking. In the small boxes, put the number of units consumed in the session.

Drinking Diary					
	AM PM Eve	Where and with whom/ alone	Type of drink	Units	£ spent
Mon					
Tue					
Wed					
Thu					
Fri					
Sat					
Sun					
Total Units					

How much money did you spend on alcohol in the week?

Very heavy drinkers may also get diabetes because of damage to their pancreas, which normally produces insulin. They may also damage their liver, but they are unlikely to actually feel that damage being done.

If you experience any of these symptoms it is important you discuss this with your GP.

### **Suddenly stopping very heavy drinking**

The body, and especially the brain, will adjust to cope with large amounts of alcohol if the alcohol is present in the body all the time. That means that the body, and especially the brain, has to readjust if the alcohol is taken away.

If your body has adjusted to coping with continuous large amounts of alcohol and then the alcohol is suddenly stopped then you may experience the following:

- Shaking or tremors all over.
- Very heavy sweating.
- Extremely high blood pressure, and looking very red in the face.
- Vomiting and diarrhoea, and the only way to keep down any food will be after drinking more alcohol.

## 8. What is dependent use of alcohol?

There are some things that everybody should know about very heavy drinking.

### Continuous heavy drinking

Many people who drink very heavily every day do not eat properly. In particular, they do not get enough Vitamin B. At the same time, the body needs extra Vitamin B to repair the damage caused by alcohol. It particularly needs Vitamin B to repair damage to nerve cells in the body, including the brain. Very heavy drinking flushes vitamins out of the body. So the very heavy drinker needs more Vitamin B than most people but usually gets less. This leads to nerve damage. Many very heavy drinkers first experience damage to their nerves as 'pins and needles' in their fingers and toes.

Very heavy drinkers may also experience being breathless when doing ordinary activities, like walking upstairs. They may feel constantly tired. And they may find that they bruise very easily. This is because the alcohol is damaging the blood cells that carry oxygen and other blood cells that help stop bleeding.

When you have completed your Drinking Diary, use it to help you answer the following questions.

Questions	Scoring System					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often do you have a drink that contains alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4+ times per week	
How many standard alcoholic drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	10+	
How often do you have one or more standard drinks on one occasion?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

Questions	Scoring System					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often in the last year have you failed to do what was expected of you because of drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often in the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get you going?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often in the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or regret after drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

improve once you reduce your alcohol intake and follow these tips.

- I'm bored**  
Remember: Plan your day out so that you have something to look forward to. Use the money you are saving on alcohol for something special. Get in touch with supportive friends who won't try to get you to drink. Look for a new hobby or interest. Get on with some jobs that you have not got round to.
- I'm stressed out and can't relax**  
Remember: Relaxation and leisure time each day is important. Plan your time and do one thing at a time. Eat a balanced diet. Talk things over with a friend or family member. Set priorities and don't be afraid to say no.
- I'm out with friends but don't feel part of the crowd**  
Remember: Try not focus on yourself. Think about those around you. Ask what is going on in their lives, and listen to what is being said. You do not need to keep up drinking with friends who are heavy drinkers; that's their choice and not yours. People will not dislike you just because you are not drinking as much.

you enjoy. These may be cold soft drinks such as fizzy drinks, cordials or fruit juices. Or they may be hot drinks such as tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cocoa, or malted drinks.

- If you tend to drink alcohol when you are out with friends, offer to be the non-drinking driver so you have a good excuse ready for not drinking alcohol.
- If you are drinking alcohol, alternate your alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks. Remember many pubs now sell tea and coffee.

## Particular problems

### I am not drinking alcohol and...

- **I feel anxious**

Remember: Try relaxation or yoga. Practise slow, deep breathing. Use calming thoughts, ignore anxious thoughts, and make a plan of your time to keep busy. Distract yourself.

- **I can't sleep**

Remember: Exercise regularly – but not late in the evening! Go to bed and get up at a regular time. Make sure your bed and bedroom are comfortable. Have a bedtime routine and wind down before going to bed. Your sleep will

Questions	Scoring System					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often in the last year have you not been able to remember what happened when drinking the night before?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	
Has a relative/ friend/ doctor/ health worker been concerned about your drinking or advised you to cut down?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	
Add up the numbers in the right-hand column. <b>What is the total?</b>						

- If you scored **up to 7**, probably you are drinking sensibly.
- If you scored between **8 and 15**, then your drinking is probably hazardous. You are putting your health at risk.
- If you scored between **16 and 19**, then your drinking is probably harmful. Although you may not notice it, your health is suffering because of the alcohol.
- If you are scoring **20 or more**, then you might be alcohol dependent.

Now put the information together that you have learned about yourself.

My drinking is probably:

- Sensible
- Hazardous
- Harmful
- Dependent

If you are unhappy with the amount you drink, and believe you may be a harmful drinker or a hazardous drinker then you should find help in the following pages.

- Try to eat before drinking alcohol. You will probably drink less if you are full.
- Start drinking later in the evening, whether you drink at home or go out to drink; set a time before which you won't have an alcoholic drink.
- If you drink spirits, dilute them with a mixer (tonic, soda, ginger ale, lemonade etc.) and increase the amounts of the mixer to make them 'long drinks'.
- If you drink wine, buy small glasses rather than large ones and try 'spritzers' (mixing your wine with soda or lemonade). Try to drink lower strength wines.
- If you drink beer or lager, stick to standard strength and avoid extra-strength varieties or premium varieties.

## Alternatives

Begin to reduce the time you spend drinking alcohol by looking for alternatives.

- Pick one day a week when you usually drink alcohol and do something else instead e.g. go to the cinema, go swimming or some other activity.
- If you tend to drink alcohol at home, experiment with non-alcoholic drinks until you find one that

- Identify high-risk times i.e. times when you know that you might drink too much e.g. on a night out with friends, at home after a hard day, on Friday or Saturday nights.
- Pick at least two days a week when you will not drink any alcohol.
- On days when you plan to drink, pick the time when you will stop drinking and leave the pub or bar, or the time when you will go to bed.
- On the days when you plan to drink alcohol, write down what types of drinks you will have and how many. Try to work out how many units of alcohol you will drink.
- Keep track of how much you really drink by recording what you actually had next to what you planned to have.
- Plan to eat before you start drinking, and if possible eat while you are drinking. This can help to reduce the effect of alcohol on your body.

## Trimming

Begin to reduce the amount of alcohol you actually drink by trimming back at the times you'll least miss it.

- If you go out to drink, don't have a drink at home beforehand.

If you believe that you are a **dependent drinker** then it is very important that you see your Doctor before you stop drinking.

## 5. Why do you drink alcohol?

To get the most out of the help in the following pages, record all the reasons why you drink alcohol. Some common reasons why people drink alcohol are listed below. You may drink for reasons of your own. You should add any of your own reasons at the end of the list.

Why I drink alcohol	Yes/No
Because my friends do.	
Because it helps me relax.	
Because it helps me sleep at night.	
Because it helps me stay calm when I'm mixing socially.	
Because I get bored – it's something to do.	
Because I feel anxious if I go without alcohol.	

Because I feel low in mood.	
Because I like the feeling of being drunk.	
Because it helps me to forget some things in my life that cause me stress and make me unhappy e.g. debts; a difficult personal relationship; problems at work.	
Other reasons	

Now think about what might be good about stopping drinking alcohol or cutting down on the amount you do drink. Some of the advantages of drinking less, or not at all, are listed below. You can also add other good things of your own. In the right-hand column, number the top three advantages for you of cutting down or even stopping your drinking. These will be your top three reasons for reducing or stopping your drinking.

I am a	I want to
<input type="checkbox"/> safe drinker <input type="checkbox"/> hazardous drinker <input type="checkbox"/> harmful drinker <input type="checkbox"/> dependent drinker	<input type="checkbox"/> carry on <input type="checkbox"/> cut down <input type="checkbox"/> stop

**Remember:**

If you believe that you are a dependent drinker of alcohol, then it is very important that you see your Doctor before you stop drinking.

**7. How can you control your drinking?**

The way you drink alcohol now is in part a habit. It is a habit that took time to develop. Now you should take time to make new habits in the way you use alcohol.

**Planning**

Begin to take control of your drinking by planning when and how much you will drink.

- Use your Drinking Diary to plan when you will drink alcohol and how much you will drink.

<b>If I reduce or stop my use of alcohol</b>	
<p><b>Advantages</b> What's good about drinking less or not drinking at all?</p>	<p><b>Disadvantages</b> What's bad about drinking less or not drinking at all?</p>
<p><b>How I see myself and my life in six months time if I reduce or stop my drinking</b></p>	

Now come to a clear and honest conclusion about yourself and your drinking, and what you want to do about your drinking.

<b>Advantages of stopping or reducing alcohol</b>	<b>My top 3 reasons</b>
I'll have more cash to spend on other things.	
I'll lose weight.	
I'll sleep better at night.	
I'll wake-up in a morning feeling refreshed.	
I'll feel happier and my mood will improve.	
I'll feel more in control.	
I'll look and feel healthier and fitter.	
I'll get on better with my family and friends.	
I'll become much more relaxed.	
Other reasons	

## 6. What do you want to do?

You now understand a lot about your drinking. You know how much you drink. You know when you drink. You know why you drink. You also know what you will gain by reducing or stopping your drinking.

Do you want to continue drinking alcohol, but less of it and less frequently?

Or do you want to stop drinking alcohol altogether?

Think about the consequences of continuing drinking in the way you do now. What is good and what is bad about that? How would you see your life in six months time?

<b>If I continue to use alcohol like I do now</b>	
<b>Advantages</b> What's good about drinking?	<b>Disadvantages</b> What's bad about drinking?
<b>How I see myself and my life in six months time if I continue drinking</b>	

Now think about reducing or stopping drinking. What will be good and bad about that? How would you expect your life to be in six months time if you reduced your drinking or stopped altogether?