Units and calories in alcohol

Below are the units and calories in common drinks:
One alcohol unit is measured as 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol.

• **Pint of (4%) beer or stout**	2.5 units / 193 calories
• **Pint of (5.2%) beer (eg Stella)**	3 units / 242 calories
• **Bottle of (5%) beer (eg Grolsch or Budweiser)**	2.8 units / 138 calories
• **Pint of (4.5%) cider (eg Magners or Strongbow)**	2.5 units / 207 calories
• **Pint of (7.5%) cider (eg Diamond White)**	4 units / 230 calories
• **Bottle of (4%) alcopops (eg WKD, Smirnoff Ice, Reef)**	1.4 units / 174 calories
• **Small glass (50ml) of cream liqueur (20%) (eg Baileys)**	1 unit / 175 calories
• **Small glass (125ml) of champagne**	1.5 units / 95 calories
• **Medium glass (175ml) of wine (13%)**	2.3 units / 125 calories
• **Large glass (250ml) of wine (13%)**	3.3 units / 191 calories
• **Bottle of wine (13%)**	10 units / 575 calories
• **Single shot (25ml) of clear spirits (eg gin, vodka, Bacardi)**	1 unit / 52 calories
• **Single shot (25ml) of dark spirits (eg whiskey, brandy)**	1 unit / 61 calories

Pint of beer | Bottle of alcopops | Large glass of wine | Single shot of spirits | Bottle of wine

Sources of Help

If you're worried about your drinking, these agencies will be happy to help you:

Alcoholics Anonymous: 0800 9177 650
web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk | email: help@aamail.org
Holds around 4,400 weekly meetings in the UK

Aquarius (Birmingham): 0121 622 8181
web: aquarius.org.uk | email: headoffice@aquarius.org.uk
Offers advice on alcohol, drugs and gambling via one-to-one or group sessions

Change4Life: 0300 123 4567
web: www.nhs.co.uk/change4life
NHS-backed service advising how to live a healthier lifestyle

Drinkline: 0300 123 1110
Free, confidential helpline for concerned drinkers
Mon-Fri: 09:00-20:00; Sat, Sun: 11:00-16:00

Drinkaware: 0207 766 9900
web: drinkaware.co.uk | email: contact@drinkaware.co.uk
Independent UK charity working to reduce alcohol misuse and harm

AL-Anon Family Groups:
web: www.al-anonuk.org.uk | email submission form: www.al-anonuk.org.uk/node/5456

References:
1. Institute of Alcohol Studies (2016)
2. Aviva (May 2008), 'UK employees admit that regular drinking affects their jobs'

mohs workplace health

info@mohs.co.uk | 0121 601 4041 | mohs.co.uk

MOHS Workplace Health Ltd | 83 Birmingham Road | West Bromwich | B70 6PX | Charity no 230407

Alcohol & your health
A guide to safe drinking

mohs workplace health

Bringing health to life

Drinking socially with friends or family to celebrate a special occasion is one of life's pleasures. But if you drink regularly, you need to know the facts as alcohol abuse is a significant cause of major health problems. Moderate to heavy drinking over many years can cause high blood pressure, damage vital organs like the heart, liver or brain and may cause cancer.

The facts

- Alcohol is a depressant – not a stimulant – which is why drinking too much often leads to impaired judgement, slurred speech, a tendency towards violent or vulnerable behaviour and short term memory loss
- Alcohol can be highly addictive – around 3 million UK adults have evidence of mild alcohol dependency, and should cut down or stop drinking before it progresses
- Alcohol is frequently associated with mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety
- Alcohol irritates the stomach so a bout of heavy drinking can cause sickness, nausea and sometimes diarrhoea
- Alcohol is a poison and drinking too much of it – whether over a long period of time or the occasional binge session – can harm or even kill us

Alcohol and the workplace

Around 17 million working days are lost each year because of alcohol related sickness and the cost to employers is estimated to be £7.3bn [1].

Heavy drinking during the working week contributes to alcohol related health problems, which in turn impacts on productivity.

A study [2] found the following:

- One third of employees admitted being at work with a hangover
- 15% reported being drunk at work
- 1 in 10 reported hangovers at work once a month; 1 in 20 once a week
- Work problems from hangovers or being drunk at work included difficulty concentrating, reduced productivity, tiredness and mistakes
- Majority of employers [77%] interviewed identified alcohol as a major threat to well-being and a factor encouraging sickness absence

Alcohol and stress

Drinking small amounts can make us feel happy, relaxed and confident for a short while so it can be tempting to drink when stressed or overworked. But alcohol is only a short term solution - the problems will still be there in the morning and can seem worse with a hangover.

Long-term drinking can also increase feelings of anxiety and if you start relying on alcohol, you could become dependent on it.

Try to find other ways of coping with stress, such as exercise, or relaxation, talking to a trusted friend or colleague or visiting your GP to seek other professional help.

Alcohol and dependency

According to Drinkaware, one in 25 adults are dependent on alcohol.

The warning signs are:

- Needing or wanting to drink every day
- Drinking alone
- Increased tolerance to alcohol, so you need to drink more to get drunk
- Needing a drink to stop trembling (the shakes)
- Drinking early, or first thing in the morning (to avoid withdrawal symptoms)
- Spending time in places where alcohol is readily available eg social clubs or pubs
- Neglecting other interests or pleasures because of alcohol drinking

Alcohol and obesity

Does drinking alcohol make you fat?

The short answer is: if you booze, you won't lose!

The long answer is more complicated. The body views alcohol as a toxin and will process it before other calories consumed or stored.

If you eat and drink more calories than you need, the fat from the Big Mac you just ate or the sugar you drank in your coke will be stored in fat cells to be processed later.

If you repeatedly drink, your body never gets round to metabolising the fat or sugar in those fat cells so you gain weight over time.

You also become a high risk for obesity-related diseases eg diabetes (type 2) and heart attacks.

Safe drinking limits

- Men should drink no more than 3 – 4 units of alcohol per day (max: 21 units per week)
- Women (excluding pregnant women) should drink no more than 2 – 3 units per day (max: 14 units per week)
- Have at least 2 or 3 AFDs (alcohol free days) each week
- Don't save up your units for the weekend as drinking more than the recommended daily limit is potentially dangerous and qualifies as 'binge' drinking
- If you drive, operate machinery, or take some types of medication, even one or two units can be dangerous

You may need to stop drinking completely if:

- You have a health problem, like liver or heart disease
- You regularly have memory blackouts and can't remember things that happened when you were drinking
- You are worried you may have become dependent on alcohol

Tips for cutting down or minimising the effects of alcohol

Drinking in general

- Avoid drinking alone
- Don't drink if you already feel angry, upset, or unstable
- Don't drink on an empty stomach or if you haven't had much sleep
- Drink longer drinks eg beer and lager rather than spirits
- Pace yourself and have no more than one drink an hour
- Stay hydrated and replace some of your drinks with non alcoholic or low alcohol drinks
- If you are taking prescription medications, check with your GP to see if you can mix them with alcohol
- Have at least 2 alcohol free days a week
- Find other ways to relax or celebrate a special occasion
- Take up a new interest or sport if most of your social life revolves around the pub
- Don't stock up at home
- Let your friends, family and work colleagues know you're cutting down and ask them to be supportive
- Practice how to say no to alcohol when it is offered to you

Drinking socially

- Go out later or have your first drink later
- Know your limits and decide a 'cut-off' point of no more than, say, 5 units on any one occasion
- Tell others you are cutting down and avoid getting into rounds
- Avoid the quick drink situation – missing out on the 'quickie' at lunchtime or after work can make a huge difference over the week
- Don't go out with people who binge drink or who will look down on you for not drinking
- If you anticipate a heavy evening, avoid drinking on an empty stomach and make sure someone else is driving. Always know how you are getting home

Drinking at home

- Buy beers and wines with a lower alcohol content
- Buy smaller glasses (eg swap those cavernous 250ml wine glasses for a set of 125ml ones) or buy a drinks measure
- Trade up and treat yourself to a special bottle of wine that's expensive enough to encourage you to enjoy it over a few days, rather than downing it in one go
- Keep a supply of non alcoholic alternatives available

Good reasons to drink less

- You'll have more time to do the things you have always wanted to do
- You'll save a lot of money
- You'll feel happier
- You'll be less likely to have arguments with those around you
- You'll sleep better
- You'll have more energy
- It can help you lose weight
- Your memory of a night out will be better
- You'll be less likely to develop high blood pressure, which can lead to a stroke
- You'll be less likely to develop serious heart problems related to drinking, such as heart or liver disease or even cancer