

## Alcohol Awareness

### Are you concerned you are drinking too much?

The last few years have been a time of change with the combination of COVID and the impact of the increase in the cost of living. For some alcohol has started to play an increasingly important part in their lives.

**How many times have you noticed yourself thinking “I could murder a drink?”, “Is it wine o clock?”. In response to how you are feeling, have you noticed your number of alcohol-free days reducing?**

If you are curious as to whether your drinking is starting to affect your health and home life, take the short quiz below:

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| 1. Have you ever felt you needed to <b>C</b> ut down on your drinking?   |
| 2. Have people <b>A</b> nnoyed you by criticising your drinking?   |
| 3. Have you ever felt <b>G</b> uilty about drinking?   |
| 4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning ( <b>E</b> ye-opener) to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover? |

If you’ve answered yes to **two or more** of these questions you may want to make some changes to your drinking to improve your health. Recognising you may be drinking too much is an **important first step towards making healthier life choices**.

### You may be drinking more than you think

We’re advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis, however with so many different drinks and glass sizes available it’s easy to get confused.

**You may be surprised at how much you are really drinking.**

The below drinks represent one unit of alcohol.



Half Pint of regular beer, lager or cider



1 small glass of wine




1 single measure of spirits



1 small glass of sherry



1 single measure of aperitifs



A small glass of wine is 125 mls and the one unit refers to a lesser % wine. You may find it helpful to pour a normal glass of wine or spirits and then measure the amount. This often is quite surprising for people.

## Reduce the harm

Reducing alcohol use can be a positive step towards improving your health. Here are some tips that may help you to reduce your drinking.

1. Set **clear goals which matter to you** to help you stay focused. Maybe you want to cut down, have some alcohol-free days, or set a maximum number of drinks on a night out.
2. Identify **triggers and develop coping mechanisms**. Think about when and why you drink. Recognise some situations, emotions, or people may trigger your desire to drink. Develop some coping mechanisms, such as engaging in physical activities, trying relaxation techniques, or seeking support from friends or family.
3. Plan **alternative activities**: Try something different, look for and take part in activities to replace drinking such as exploring hobbies, joining clubs/groups, or spending more time with friends and family. Keeping yourself busy with other activities can reduce the temptation to drink.
4. **Modify your environment**: So that it becomes more of an effort to get a drink, remove or limit alcohol in your surroundings. Avoid keeping alcohol at home or in easily accessible places. This step can help minimise the temptation to drink as you actively seek it out and sometimes it is just out of habit.
5. **Practice self-care**: Look after you, you are really important. Focus on self-care activities for your own wellbeing. Engage in regular exercise, eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and try to manage stress levels. Looking after you means you are in a better place if you need to look after others. Taking care of your physical and mental health can reduce the urge to rely on alcohol.
6. **Track your progress**: Note it down - you may be surprised how much you drank last week. Keep a journal or use a tracking app to record your alcohol consumption and progress toward your goals. Seeing your progress over time can inspire you to continue reducing your alcohol use.
7. **Seek support**: Reach out to supportive friends, family members, or reach out to Cranstoun who can help.

## Contact us

Cranstoun inspires and empowers people to live healthier and safer lives. We provide free and confidential alcohol support.

We're here to help, not judge and can offer advice and information to help you change your relationship with alcohol and improve your health.

**Reach out early and make positive changes.**

**Cranstoun Sandwell  
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**T: 0121 553 1333**

**E: [sandwellreferrals@cranstoun.org.uk](mailto:sandwellreferrals@cranstoun.org.uk)**

**[www.cranstoun.org](http://www.cranstoun.org)**

You may also find useful advice via the NHS website:

[Alcohol support - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

