

## Alcohol and your period

Some women find alcohol affects them more during their period. This is because the rate alcohol is dealt with by the body can slow during this time. Heavy, prolonged drinking can result in irregular periods or stop them altogether (though you can still get pregnant).

## Fertility

Alcohol lowers sperm count in men and fertility in women. If you're trying for a baby, consider cutting down or cutting it out altogether.

## Pregnancy

Even small amounts of alcohol can harm the unborn child. Avoid alcohol if pregnant or trying to conceive.



## Breastfeeding

When breastfeeding, your baby consumes most of what you eat and drink – including alcohol. If you choose to drink at all, keep to minimal amounts.

## Mental well-being

Alcohol can make feelings of anxiety and depression worse and contribute to stress. Better ways to cope with life's challenges include learning problem solving and relaxation techniques, taking regular exercise and sharing worries with someone you trust.

## Breast cancer

In Scotland, 500 new cases of breast cancer each year could be linked to alcohol consumption. The world's largest study of women's drinking behaviour showed the risk of breast cancer increases by 10% for every extra alcoholic drink you drink every day over the **sensible limit**.



## Liver disease

In 1991, 37% of the 245 alcohol-related deaths among women in Scotland had alcoholic liver disease as their cause. In 2005, 492 women in Scotland died because of alcohol. 338 of them (69%) were caused by alcoholic liver disease.

## Coping with someone else's drinking

A heavy drinker can make the whole family unhappy and leave you angry, scared, confused, guilty and unable to cope.

If the person is prone to be violent towards you, you must seek help. Before confronting them, talk it through with someone else first and always consider your own safety.

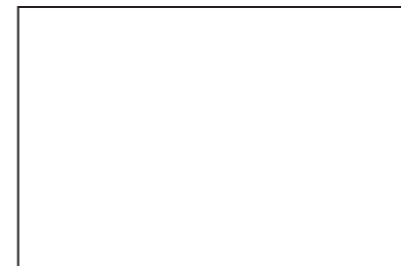
For advice, call the **Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 027 1234**.

## Worried about your own or someone else's drinking?

Call **DRINKLINE** free on **0800 7 314 314** at any time.

Call **DRINKLINE** to order free copies of other leaflets in this series. Topics include young people, stress, healthy living, sensible drinking and how to recognise problem drinking.

For more tips and information about alcohol, visit [www.infoscotland.com/alcohol](http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol)

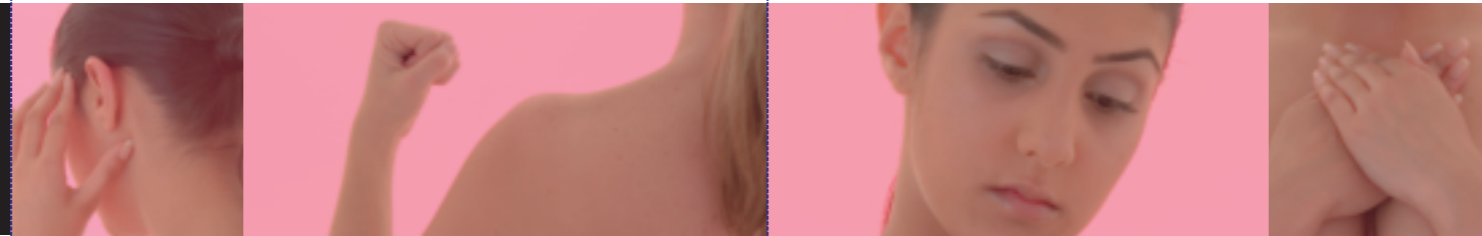


# Women and Alcohol

What every woman needs to know.



We all need at least 2 days a week without alcohol.



Being drunk makes us vulnerable. Look after each other on nights out, and make sure everyone gets home safely.

## Booze nation

Alcohol is more widely available and cheaper than ever before. In 2002, the average weekly consumption for women was 45% higher than in 1992.



## So what's the problem?

### Women are more at risk from alcohol

Women are usually smaller than men and do not have as high a proportion of water to fat. This means alcohol stays more concentrated inside a woman's body. Women's livers don't neutralise alcohol as quickly as men's and can't remove it from the blood as quickly either. In short, the same amount of alcohol will get you more drunk more quickly and, if you exceed sensible limits, may harm you more.

## Sensible limits

### Men:

No more than 3-4 units a day and no more than 21 units in one week.

### Women:

No more than 2-3 units a day and no more than 14 units a week.

## What's a 'unit'?

A unit is equal to 10ml of pure alcohol. This is the amount a healthy, adult liver can safely process in one hour.



## How many units in a drink?

 35ml measure gin/rum/vodka/whisky:	1.4 units
 330ml bottle standard lager/beer:	1.7 units
 1 pint medium strength lager/beer:	2.8 units
 1 pint standard lager/beer:	2.3 units
 1 pint strong cider:	3.4 units
 700ml bottle whisky:	28 units
 275ml bottle alcopop:	1.5 units
 175ml glass standard size wine:	2.1 units
 750ml bottle wine:	9.8 units

(Don't forget, home 'measures' are often twice the size of those in pubs!)

## Alcohol and weight gain

There are almost 200 calories in a large glass of red wine. At 7 calories per gram, alcohol contains more calories than many foods. Sugar in drinks comes on top of that. Alcohol can stimulate the appetite too, so you're more likely to eat more.

## Personal safety

Alcohol lowers inhibitions and can make us more likely to get into risky situations. Being drunk makes us more vulnerable to accidents and physical and sexual assault. Keep an eye on each other when you're out and don't let anyone walk home alone, or with a stranger. Make sure you get home safely.

## Contraception

The contraceptive pill can slow the rate alcohol gets into the bloodstream so you won't get drunk as fast. This doesn't mean you can ignore **sensible limits**. Heavy use can make the pill less effective. If in doubt, ask your doctor for details. Having sex while drunk makes us more vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.