



Alcohol Awareness Week

Inspire Workplaces Calendar, November 2020

Alcohol Awareness Week takes place from 16th-22nd November, providing an opportunity for us to think about our drinking.

How often do we stop to think about how much we drink, why we drink, and what effect it can have on our health and mental wellbeing?

With lockdown measures affecting how, when and where we socialise – and with many of us staying at home for longer periods of time – how might that have affected our personal drinking habits and our relationship with alcohol?

Alcohol is something many of us reach for when we're feeling stressed, anxious or worried. While alcohol may initially help us to relax – the effects are short-lived. In the long run – and if misused – it can make stress harder to deal with, and even contribute to feelings of depression and

anxiety. According to [alcoholchange.org.uk](https://www.alcoholchange.org.uk) drinking too much, “can mask or enhance underlying mental health problems...and prevent them from being properly addressed.”

Becoming more informed about the effects of alcohol on our physical health and mental wellbeing can help us to make informed choices about our drinking.

Here are just a few of the many resources available:

Alcohol and mental health:

www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/alcohol/mental-health/how-alcohol-affects-your-mental-health.html

www.alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-and-mental-health

www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/#mentalhealth

Alcohol and physical health:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/risks/
www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/
www2.hse.ie/alcohol-and-health/

How much is too much?

How do we know if we're drinking too much, and in a way that may impact our health?

The Department of Health has set out guidelines to help us keep health risks from alcohol to a low level:

NI/UK: For both men and women, no more than 14 units a week on a regular basis and best to spread drinking evenly over 3 or more days.

ROI: 11 standard drinks spread out over the week for women, and 17 standard drinks for men with at least two alcohol-free days – drinking no more than 6 standard drinks on any one occasion.



Stepping back and having an objective look at our drinking may help us to identify whether the amount we drink could be putting us at risk.

How much are we drinking?

Knowing how much alcohol is in our drinks can help us keep track of how much we're drinking. It's important to remember that one unit of alcohol is not the same as one drink – alcoholic drinks come in many different strengths and sizes.

A quick strength check is to look at the %ABV (alcohol by volume) on the side of a bottle or can – the higher the percentage, the stronger the drink.

The PHA have issued this quick guide to alcohol units:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2019-06/Focus%20on%20alcohol%20A5%20Leaflet%2004_19.pdf

And further alcohol unit advice from the NHS:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units/

In Ireland, a standard drink as a measure of alcohol is roughly the equivalent to a small glass of wine, half pint of normal beer, or pub measure of spirits (with one standard drink containing 10gms of alcohol).

For more on Irish standard drink and unit measurements:

www.drinkaware.ie/facts/what-is-a-standard-drink

Is it time for a change?

Many of us drink – and for many different reasons.

Stepping back and having an objective look at our drinking may help us to identify whether the amount we drink could be putting us at risk.

The **Inspire Support Hub** provides a tailored **online alcohol self-help course** that helps us to view our drinking habits and identify whether we may be at risk, with information allowing us to make informed decisions for setting goals and taking positive next steps.

Visit: www.inspiresupporthub.org and sign in. From your personalised dashboard, click 'Online self-help' and select 'alcohol' from the range of courses available.

If you haven't yet signed up to the Hub, ask your HR or wellbeing team for your company/organisation PIN; or contact us at: hubsupport@inspirewellbeing.org.

Ways to cut down

If on reflection, you feel moderating or cutting down on your drinking would be of benefit – here are a few quick suggestions to help you stay within your limits:

- Keep to your personal drinking rules: when, where and how to drink
- Pace yourself
- Take smaller sips
- Put your glass down between sips
- Change your drink
- Drink for the taste
- If you drink spirits, dilute them and have a soft drink between alcoholic drinks
- Find alternative ways to reward yourself for success
- Have a cut-off point that is realistic, yet represents a meaningful reduction in your drinking
- Have rest days from alcohol

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking, you can get information and advice by contacting your GP.

You can find more information by visiting:

NI:

Addiction NI: www.addictionni.com / Tel. 028 90 664434

NI/UK:

www.inspiresupporthub.org

www.drinkaware.co.uk/

www.drugsandalcoholni.info

www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/advice-you/alcohol-stay-safe-during-coronavirus/

ROI:

www.inspiresupporthub.org

www.drugs.ie/phone

www.askaboutalcohol.ie

www.drinkaware.ie

