

# 13 Alcohol

Time Taken:  
20 Minutes



## Objectives

This section will introduce participants to the topic of Alcohol.





## Step 1

### What is Alcohol?

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Inform participants that today's topic to be covered is alcohol.

*Ask participants does anyone know what alcohol is?*

Alcohol is a drug found in drinks like beer, wine and spirits such as vodka and whiskey.

Alcohol can change the way we feel. It slows down various parts of the brain and our reactions.



If you are 18 years of age or older, you can legally have a drink, however too much alcohol can affect our ability to control our behaviour.



## What is a unit or a drink?

A unit (NI) or a drink (ROI) is a specific measure of pure alcohol.

*Ask participants do they know the maximum units (NI) or drinks (ROI) of alcohol they can have in a week?*

Low risk weekly guidelines:

- ▼ In the Republic of Ireland guidelines allow 11 drinks for females and 17 for males.
- ▼ In Northern Ireland guidelines allow 14 units per week for both females and males.

In addition:

- ▼ 2-3 alcohol free days are advised each week.



## Step 2

### Effects of Alcohol?

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*Ask participants what happens if we drink too much?*

If you drink alcohol it can make you feel good but as you drink more you can start to lose control. If you get drunk you might:

- ▼ Have an argument/fight.
- ▼ Fall or injure yourself which could impact your sports performance.
- ▼ Forget things.
- ▼ Vomit or feel sick.

Special Olympics Ireland has a no alcohol policy at all of our events.

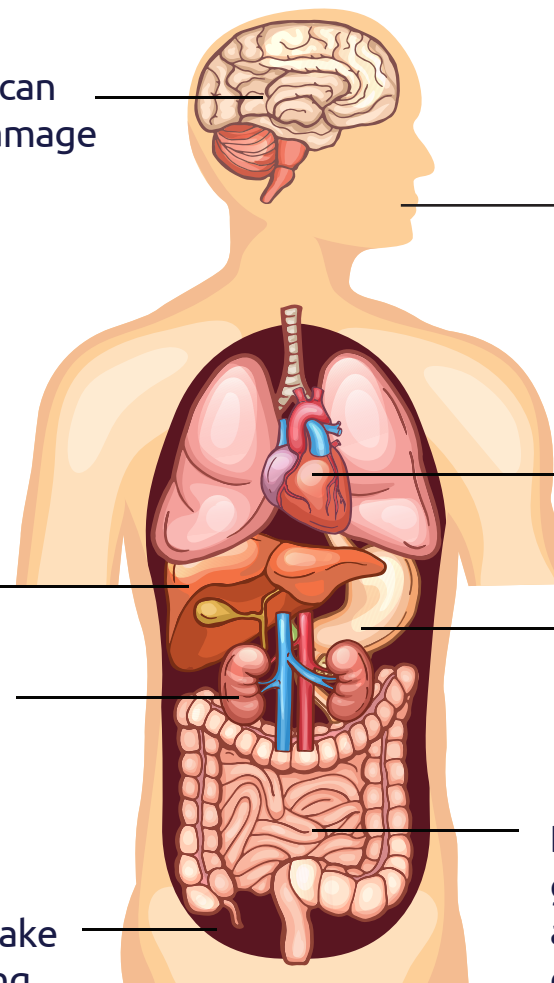
### What is Binge Drinking?

Binge drinking usually means drinking more than the recommended guidelines for alcohol in a short space of time or drinking to get drunk.



## Alcohol can Damage your Body

**Brain** - drinking too much alcohol can make you forget things and can damage brain cells.



**Mouth and Throat** - drinking too much alcohol can lead to mouth and throat cancer.

**Heart** - alcohol increases your blood pressure making your heart beat fast

**Liver** - alcohol can damage your liver.

**Kidneys** - alcohol makes you need the toilet more often, this can make you feel dehydrated.

**Stomach** - alcohol can cause ulcers and over time stomach cancer.

**Reproductive system** - alcohol can make it more difficult to have babies. Drinking any alcohol when pregnant can have a serious impact on the unborn baby.

**Bowels** - alcohol can give you diarrhoea and lead to bowel cancer.

## Step 3

### Alcohol, Calories and Sugar

Alcohol is made from natural sugar and starch but the amount of calories and sugar in different types of alcohol will vary. Alcohol has a high calorie content. Drinking regularly will increase your sugar and calorie intake. These are 'empty calories' with no nutritional value or benefit.



#### Did you Know?

- One gram of alcohol = seven calories.
- The amount of calories and sugar you consume through alcohol can stack up quickly.
- For example, drinking a six pack of cider (4.5%) over the course of the week will add 1,260 calories and 126 grams or 32 teaspoons of sugar to your intake.

## Step 4

### Alcohol and Health

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When it comes to fitness or weight loss goals, we often forget to count calories and sugar from alcohol.

Drinking less alcohol can help to maintain a healthier weight and healthier body.

#### The Benefits of Reducing Alcohol Intake:

- ▼ Blood pressure and blood sugar levels drop.
- ▼ Improved sleep, more energy and skin look's healthier.
- ▼ Possible weight loss.
- ▼ Reduced harm to organs.
- ▼ Clearer thoughts and improved motivation.
- ▼ Improved fitness and sports performance.





## Step 5

### Cutting Down Alcohol

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*Ask participants how they could cut down on the amount of alcohol they drink?*

- Avoid drinking before you go out.
- Drink low alcohol drinks (choose a lower strength or non-alcoholic beer/wine).
- Keep to the low risk weekly guidelines.
- Order smaller sized drinks (choose a half pint or bottle rather than a pint).
- Always use a measure when pouring drinks, never free-pour.
- Stock up in lower strength or non-alcoholic drinks.
- Alternate between alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Don't buy alcohol each week as part of the shopping.
- Always finish one glass before refilling.



## Step 6

### Task Time

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If you want to stop drinking you need to ask for help.

A plan can help you to cut down or stop drinking.

Ask participants to think of some things that were discussed in the workshop and what things they could do in their daily lives to cut down or stop drinking.

The plan on the next page can be used to write or draw ideas.



## I Can

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1. Buy non-alcoholic beer and switch to that if I like it.

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