

It is important to remember that the number of teenagers who drink underage has declined in recent years. However, those teenagers who do drink are consuming more alcohol, more often and it is this fact that is causing most concern.

## Units of Alcohol

- Adult women should not regularly\* drink more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol a day
- Adult men should not regularly drink more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day
- Binge drinking is less clearly defined but guidance from the NHS describes it as drinking more than double the daily recommended units in one session.  
(\* Regularly means every day or most days of the week)

### Table of Units

1 bottle (275ml) alcopop, e.g. Bacardi Breezer, Smirnoff Ice, WKD	1.1 units
1 can (440ml) of ordinary strength lager, e.g. Carling, Stella Artois	1.8 units
1 can of strong lager (e.g. Carlsberg Export)	2.2 units
1 can of Strongbow cider	2.3 units
1 litre bottle of Strongbow cider	5.3 units
1 single pub measure (25ml) of gin, vodka or rum	1 unit
1 half bottle (350ml) of vodka	13.1 units
1 large glass (175ml) of red or white wine	2.1 units
1 standard bottle (750ml) of red or white wine (12%)	9 units

NB: the number of units can vary depending on the brand of drink, so the above is just a rough guide

## Differences in the Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol can affect each person differently, it depends on:

- How often people drink – every unit of alcohol takes 1 hour for the liver to process after you have stopped drinking
- How much people drink – there are recommended safe limits for men and women and these are not the same.
- The size and weight of a person – the smaller the person the more likely to absorb the alcohol more quickly into the system.
- How much food a person has eaten – eating before drinking can slow down the speed at which alcohol is absorbed into the system but it does not stop it being absorbed.
- The age of the person – children and teenagers do not have fully developed bodies and their organs (heart, liver, brain etc) are smaller so the effects of alcohol can be significantly increased.

All of the above are linked to the amount a person drinks and their body's ability to deal with the alcohol.

## Long term effects on the body

- Cancer of the mouth and throat cancer
- Breast cancer in women
- High blood pressure, increased risk of heart disease and stroke
- Liver damage, such as cirrhosis and liver cancer
- Depression, memory loss, brain damage or dementia
- Stomach damage or ulcers
- Potentially fatal alcohol poisoning
- Poor immune system so you are more prone to catching infections

# Safer Drinking Teacher Guide-2 Year 9

## First Aid tips for someone who has drunk too much alcohol:

### DO...

- Be calm, and firmly assist the person to a comfortable, safe place.
- Immediately call for help, especially if the person's breathing is irregular or if they cannot be aroused by gentle shaking or speaking loudly.
- While awaiting help, lie the person on their side with knees up, to prevent choking if they vomit.
- Check breathing every 15 minutes. Do not leave them alone.
  
- **DO NOT...**
- Slap the person around the face
- Give them any medication, drugs, or food/drink (including coffee) - these only increase the risk of choking and vomiting; hot drinks may scald them.
- Try to counsel them about their behaviour. Instead, wait until they are sober to confront them.
- Induce vomiting.
- Try to walk them around.
- Give cold showers. The shock may make them pass out.

### Binge drinking trends

- Binge drinking is most common among 16-24 year olds.
- It is more common among men than women, but the number of young women binge drinking is increasing.
- If a person binge drinks in their teens, they are twice as likely to still be binge drinking as an adult.
- Binge drinking can also lead to risky, anti-social, aggressive and even violent behaviour: alcohol is reported to be a factor in one in three sexual offences, one in three burglaries and one in two street crimes. Around 70% of attendances at A&E departments on weekends are alcohol-related.

### List of useful organisations

#### Alateen

Alateen provides support for young people living with a problem drinker in the family:  
[www.al-anonuk.org.uk/alateen](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/alateen)

#### Alcohol Concern

National agency on alcohol misuse for England and Wales. Provides general information and online resources for use in the classroom: [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

#### Drinkaware

The website has a wide range of useful information including factsheets and online resources aimed at both adults and young people: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

#### Drinkline

A free, 24-hour helpline for anyone worried about their own or someone else's drinking:  
0800 917 8282

#### NACOA

National Association for Children of Alcoholics. Information, advice and support to children of alcoholics or anyone else concerned for a friend or relative's drinking:  
[www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)