

# Alcohol Awareness

## Session plan 2

**Aims:** To raise young people's awareness of the effects of alcohol

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Understand some of the harm associated with alcohol
- Understand why people may choose to use alcohol

**Group Size:** 8 young people

**Time:** One Hour

**Materials**

- Flipchart paper
- marker pens
- What you know about alcohol brief Alcohol
- Your body brief
- Alcohol scenarios
- Myths and Facts Alcohol quiz

Time	What	With
5 mins	Staff introduction: Explain the aim of the session and cover confidentiality and basic ground rules around respect	
15 mins	<p>What do you know about alcohol?</p> <p>Divide the group into 3 smaller groups. Give each group a different title (see below) and ask them to write on the paper everything they know about alcohol or how it affects the subject they've been given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol in general</li> <li>Short and long term physical effects</li> <li>Mental health (5 mins)</li> </ul> <p>Each group to then feedback to the main group, using the brief as a guide.</p>	<p>Flipchart paper Marker pens</p> <p>What you know about alcohol brief</p>
15 mins	<p>Alcohol and your body</p> <p>In the same 3 groups again give each group a different area and ask them to write down on their flipchart paper the effects alcohol has on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way you act</li> <li>Your body</li> <li>The way you look (5 mins)</li> </ul> <p>Each group to then feedback to the main group, using the brief as a guide.</p>	<p>Flipchart paper Marker pens</p> <p>Alcohol and your body brief</p>

<b>Time</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>With</b>
20 mins	<p>Alcohol scenarios</p> <p>Divide the group into 4 smaller groups and give each group an alcohol scenario card and ask them to discuss their scenario in their group deciding what they would do and why (5 mins).</p> <p>Each group to feedback their scenario and discussion to the main group. Do the other groups agree with their decisions?</p>	Alcohol scenario cards
5 mins	Evaluation: Ask each young person what they disliked, liked and learnt from the session	

**There is a Myths and Facts Alcohol quiz included which can be used with the group if there is time.**

### **About alcohol in general:**

- It's a drug
- It gets you drunk
- It's illegal to buy it when you're under 18 (but not to drink it)
- It's made when yeast and sugar are mixed
- It's a depressant (although many people believe alcohol is a stimulant)

### **Long-term physical effects:**

- Increases your chances of:
  - Having a stroke
  - Getting cancer
  - Osteoporosis (an illness that causes your bones to get thinner)
  - Heart disease
  - liver disease
  - sexual problems (including dysfunction)
  - brain damage
  - putting on weight from all the calories

### **Mental health:**

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self harm
- Unpredictable behaviour
- Family problems
- Relationship problems – friends, boy/girlfriends
- Problems at work

# Alcohol and your body

## The way you act

- Alcohol can make you feel more **relaxed, talkative and happy**. But only in small amounts. Drinking too much alcohol can leave you feeling **depressed and upset**.
- Alcohol affects your short-term memory – you may **forget** what you were going to say, or people's names. Or you might find that you wake up the next morning unable to remember parts of the night before.
- Too much alcohol **affects your judgement**. You might experience the 'beer goggle' effect, where people around you seem more attractive. You're also more likely to have an accident.
- Alcohol can make people **angry and aggressive**. You are more likely to get into arguments and fights when you've been drinking.
- How alcohol affects your brain – in other words how drunk you feel and act – depends on the amount of alcohol in your blood. Alcohol affects the part of the brain you use to think. This means you **can't think as clearly or judge situations as effectively as usual**.
- Alcohol also affects your emotions and memory. You might get **upset more easily**, and forget things – including what's happened the night before. The part of your brain that controls your muscles is also affected – that's why you stumble and fall over more easily when you're drunk.

## The way you look

- Alcohol dehydrates your body, and so it can make your **hair brittle and dull**. It can have the same effect on your nails.
- It can make your skin dry too. If you forget to take your make-up off when you've been drinking, you're **more likely to get spots**.
- Drinking more than you should over time can cause acne rosacea, a skin disorder that makes **your skin appear red**.
- It can also make your **eyes red and bloodshot**.
- Alcohol is **fattening**. Just a few drinks are often the equivalent of a few bars of chocolate. You may want to eat more fattening 'comfort' foods when drunk or hung over.
- Drinking alcohol has been linked with **cellulite**.

## Your body

### *The liver*

- The liver's main job is to break down food and convert it into energy when you need it. The liver also **helps to get rid of waste products** and to remove poisons from your body.
- When you drink, your **liver breaks down (or 'metabolises') the alcohol**. It can only get rid of around **1 unit an hour**. So, if you drink alcohol faster than your liver can deal with it, you end up with more alcohol in your blood – and become more drunk.
- Drinking heavily over a long period will **damage and eventually kill the cells in your liver**, and stop it working properly. If it's damaged too much, it stops being able to repair itself.

### **The kidneys and bladder**

- The kidneys' job is to filter your blood, **getting rid of any waste**. They also **control the amount of water in your body**.
- When alcohol gets involved, your body ends up getting rid of too much water – **you end up dehydrated**.
- When you drink alcohol the amount of urine your body produces increases (due to the 'diuretic' effect of alcohol), your bladder ends up full and **you need to go to the toilet far more often**.
- **Dehydration plays a major part in your hangover** – that's the main reason you get a headache and feel so thirsty the morning after.

### **The blood**

- Alcohol gets **into your blood through blood vessels** in the lining of your stomach. Your **blood carries alcohol around the body** to all your different organs. The more alcohol in the blood, the more drunk you will feel.
- Because the alcohol enters your blood through your stomach, the more recently you've eaten, the slower this will happen. That's why you feel the **effects of alcohol more when you drink on an empty stomach**.
- Remember, how quickly you drink, as well as your body size and weight, also affect how quickly the alcohol is absorbed and how much goes into the blood – **the same amount of alcohol will have a larger effect on a smaller person**. Women also absorb alcohol faster than men. This is because the female body has more body fat and less water than the male body.

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## Alcohol scenario cards



**Callum** is in the park with his friends. One of them gets out a large bottle of vodka. Callum has never got drunk before and isn't sure he wants to. Should he:

1. Make an excuse and go home
2. Have a sip but tell them he doesn't want anymore
3. Tell his friends he doesn't want to get drunk and that they shouldn't either
4. Say that vodka gives him a headache and he prefers beer

**Hannah** is out with her friends. She knows they drink more than she wants to and doesn't want to try and keep pace with them. Should she:

1. Drink soft drinks but pretend they've got vodka in
2. Tell her friends that she doesn't want to get too drunk, and take it easy
3. Try to keep up with them anyway
4. Have a few drinks and go home early

**Jamie** is having a party for his birthday, but his parents say they can't have any alcohol. Should he:

1. Cancel the party
2. Get some DVDs and games for the X-box so there's plenty of other stuff to do
3. Hide some alcopops in lemonade bottles
4. Try to change his parent's mind

**Jameela** wants to have sex with her boyfriend but she's not sure she's ready. He suggests they have some wine to help her relax. Should she:

1. Make sure she only has one glass so she stays in control
2. Drink the wine and see how she feels
3. Get rid of her boyfriend
4. Tell her boyfriend she'll have sex with him when she wants to, not when she's drunk

**Rob** and his friends are at a party on the other side of town and need to get home. It's 2am and they don't have any money for a taxi. Someone they know from school offers to drive them back. He insists he's fine to drive, but Rob has seen him drinking. Should he:

1. Say nothing. It'll be fine
2. Call his parents and them to pick him and his friends up
3. Ask the driver to drive slowly and make sure everyone wears a seatbelt
4. Try to persuade his friends to walk home instead

From [drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk)



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## Myths and facts about alcohol quiz



	True	False
If you've had too much to drink, a black coffee will sober you up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You get drunker if you mix drinks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's illegal to drink alcohol if you're under 18	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is more alcohol in a can of extra strong cider than a double vodka	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On a cold day you can warm yourself up by drinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can go to a pub when you're 14	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All young people aged 16 and over drink alcohol	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A glass of wine has the same number of calories as a couple of biscuits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If you drink a glass of water before you go to sleep, you won't get a hangover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You sleep really deeply when you've been drinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What did you score?



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## Myths and facts about alcohol quiz answers

True

False

**If you've had too much to drink, a black coffee will sober you up**



The caffeine might perk you up, but won't sober you up. All you can do is wait for the alcohol to pass through your system.

**You get drunker if you mix drinks**



It does make it harder to keep track of how much alcohol you've had, and you may feel sick because of the different toxins you've consumed – but mixing your drinks won't make you feel any drunker.

**It's illegal to drink alcohol if you're under 18**



You can't buy alcohol until your 18 but you can legally drink it at home or when your 16 you can also have a drink bought for you in a restaurant with a meal.

**There is more alcohol in a can of extra strong cider than a double vodka**



There are close to four units of alcohol in a can of strong cider, but around two in a double vodka.

**On a cold day you can warm yourself up by drinking**



You may feel warmer when you drink (this is because alcohol widens the blood vessels close to the skin) but your body temperature actually drops.

**You can go to a pub when you're 14**



Yes, you might be able to (depending on the pub's licence) , but you can't buy or drink alcohol.

True

False

**All young people aged 16 and over drink alcohol**



Lots of young people choose not to drink. This might be because of their religion, or because they decide they don't want to. The Government advises that children should not drink before they are 15, if at all. If 15 – 17 year olds drink, they should do so infrequently and definitely more than one day a week. This should be no more than the daily recommended guidelines for adults (3-4 units for men and 2-3 units for women). Parents and young people should be aware that drinking, even at age 15 or older, can be dangerous to your health. Not drinking is the healthiest option for young people.

**A glass of wine has the same number of calories as a couple of biscuits**



Alcohol is fattening. There are 115 calories in a 175ml glass of wine, equivalent to 2 plain digestive biscuits.

**If you drink a glass of water before you go to sleep, you won't get a hangover**



Unfortunately not, though it's always a good idea to drink plenty of water. If you alternate soft drinks with alcoholic ones, however, you'll reduce your chances of getting a hangover.

**You sleep really deeply when you've been drinking**



A lot of people think that alcohol helps you sleep, but you're actually far more likely to have disturbed or fitful sleep when you've been drinking.

From [drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk).