



Alcohol and Menopause

Information booklet



A woman with grey hair is shown from the chest up, holding a glass of red wine in her right hand. She is looking down at an open book resting on a surface in front of her. The background is a warm, out-of-focus interior with a pink circular object visible on the left.

Does alcohol affect the menopause?

Alcohol can contribute to some symptoms of the menopause, such as hot flushes and night sweats. Menopause can disrupt your sleep and alcohol can make that worse.

Many women put on weight around this time as well and as alcohol is high in calories it can contribute to weight gain. As we get older, we lose muscle and gain fat. We also break down alcohol more slowly.

Your alcohol intake during menopause may worsen mood swings and contribute to anxiety. It's not sensible to use alcohol to self-medicate when you are stressed or anxious.

Our bones slowly get thinner too, particularly in women after the menopause. Drinking a lot of alcohol can make this worse, increasing your risk of osteoporosis (a condition that affects the bones, causing them to become weak and fragile and more likely to break). This increases the risk of falls and fractures.

It doesn't affect each person in the same way. It seems to be influenced by how much you drink and what stage of the menopause you are at. The more you drink the greater the risks and effects. Drinking too much can also increase risk of a range of health conditions including breast cancer.

Alcohol and women

Alcohol affects women differently than men in general. If a woman and a man drink the same amount, the woman's blood alcohol level will usually be higher. Some of the reasons for this are:

- Women tend to be smaller than men. That means, the same amount of alcohol is going into a smaller body.
- Because alcohol is held in body water this means the alcohol can be more concentrated in women as they generally have a higher proportion of body fat than men.
- Women tend to absorb more alcohol into the bloodstream than men, due to having less of an enzyme that breaks down alcohol in the stomach.

How much should I drink?



The UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) advice is that both women and men should not regularly drink more than 14 units a week to keep health risks from alcohol low. If you do choose to drink that amount, it's best to spread your drinking evenly over three or more days.

ALCOHOL UNITS GUIDE



Pint of beer (4%)
= 2.3 units
182 calories



Pint of cider (4.5%)
= 2.6 units
216 calories



Alcopop 275ml (4%)
= 1.1 units
170 calories



Can of beer 330ml (5%)
= 1.6 units
142 calories



Spirits vodka/whiskey
35ml (40%)
= 1.4 units
85 calories



Bottle of spirits
1 litre (40%)
= 40 units
2440 calories



Small bottle of wine
187ml (13%)
= 2.4 units
170 calories



Bottle of wine
750ml (13%)
= 9.8 units
680 calories

Tips on reducing your drinking

Make a plan

Watch how much you drink, set a limit and count the units you drink.

Set a budget

Decide how much you will spend on alcohol and stick to it.

Go for smaller sizes

Choose a small glass or wine rather than a large one. Order a bottle of beer instead of a pint. Go for lower alcohol or zero alcohol drinks.

Space out your drinks

Drink water or soft drinks between alcohol drinks.

Find other ways to wind down

Don't use alcohol to wind down or deal with stress. Try other ways, like exercise or mindfulness.

Take a break

Have some alcohol free days each week.



Is it time for a change?

Why not RETHINK YOUR DRINK by considering your relationship with alcohol and reflecting on whether it is time for a change?

There are three simple steps you can follow: AWARE, PREPARE, ENGAGE.

Visit the ASCERT website for lots of useful information and ideas and tips about how you can make changes in your drinking. There is also self-care tools and you can contact us for support if you need it.

AWARE

Be informed about alcohol, its effects and its risks

REDUCE

Make changes that help reduce the risk of your drinking causing you harm

ENGAGE

Connect with us to get support or to help sustain recovery

Visit www.ascert.biz/rethink-your-drink or scan the QR code on your phone



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