

Your Health



Alcohol Awareness

The festive season is upon us and with it, often comes lots of alcohol. Enjoy the fun but take care, especially in the workplace, as alcohol and work are not a good combination! Alcohol can:

- Impair your perception and reduce your performance at work
- Have an impact on your health and safety
- Increase the chance of accidents
- Affect the potency of some medications
- Increase lateness and absenteeism
- Affect team morale.

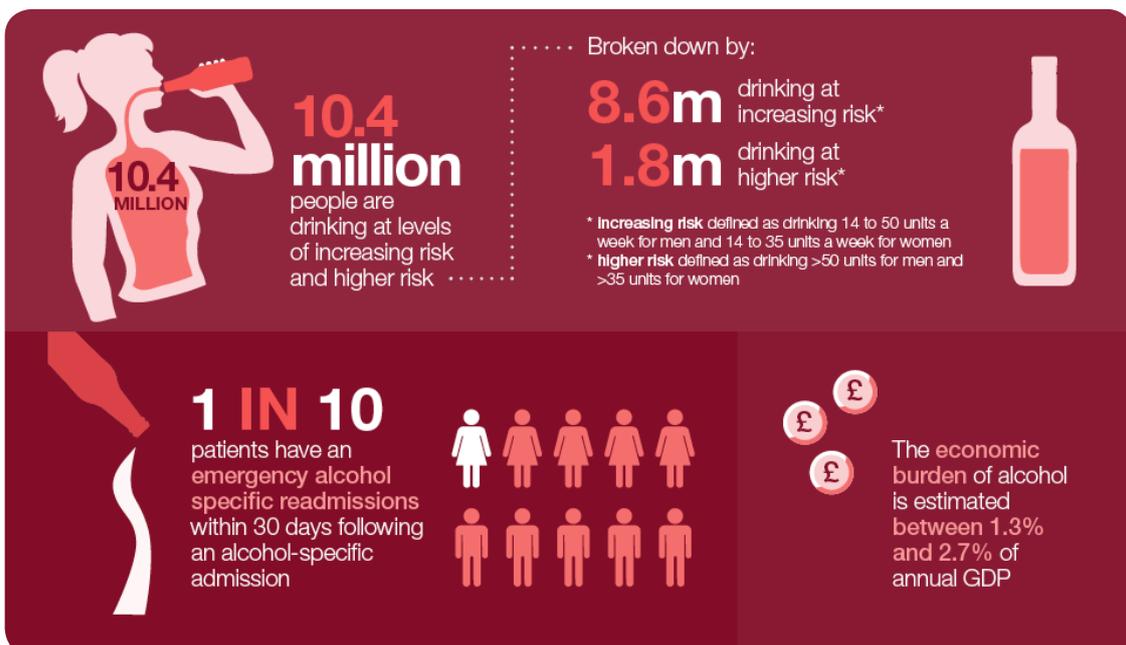


A unit is a measure of the amount of alcohol in a drink

Understanding how many units you're consuming or realising that alcohol can cause unhealthy weight gain may make you want to change your drinking habits. You can make informed choices and start to make positive changes to your lifestyle, limiting the impact that alcohol has on you. Men and women should not drink more than 14 units per week.

Tipple tips to help stay in control when drinking

- Order a smaller measure – try a half pint or a bottle of beer instead of a full pint.
- Follow the 1 for 1 rule – for each alcoholic drink you consume, follow with a soft drink/water (or two!) which will help to keep you hydrated.
- Cocktail caution – the alcohol content of cocktails can be much higher than you realise.
- Be careful of rounds – drinking in rounds can lead you to drinking quicker and more than you plan - opt out completely or stick to smaller groups.
- Try to have some alcohol-free days – your liver will thank you!



<https://www.gov.uk/> - Public Health England

Worried about your drinking? There are many places you can get help - you can speak to your GP, your OH department or your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if you have one, or alternatively contact Alcoholics Anonymous or Drinkaware.co.uk

Holiday Health

With all the rushing to buy presents, work parties and holidays, it is easy to forget the simple things to keep yourself healthy, for example:

- Wash your hands often - use soap and clean running water, and rub them together for at least 20 seconds
- Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands
- Make sure you bin any used tissues and wash your hands
- Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers - cold

HAVS Awareness

Hand-arm vibration (HAVS) is caused by the over exposure to vibration in the hands, fingers, wrists and arms. If you use hand-held power tools, be aware that over-use can cause this disabling condition which could affect your ability to work and enjoy a normal home and social life.

What are the early signs and symptoms to look out for?

- Intermittent tingling and numbness in the fingers
- Sometimes not being able to feel things with your fingers
- Sometimes loss of strength in your hands
- In the cold and wet, the tips of your fingers typically going white then red and being painful on recovery (vibration white finger).

If you have any concerns, speak to your GP or OH service.

Cold Weather Working

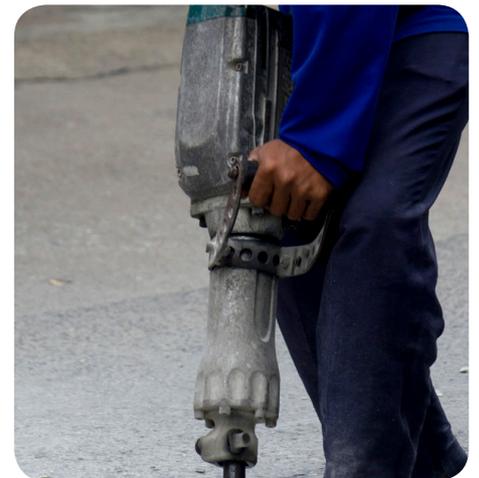
The UK winter can have a serious impact on an employee's health when working outdoors if they do not consider or manage the risks. Cold, wintery weather can cause reduced grip strength, aggravation of some medical conditions & the occurrence of cold-related emergencies.

Top tips for working outdoors:

- Make sure you wear appropriate clothing – several layers of loose clothing to ensure better insulation and any other cold weather protection gear you are given
- Protect your ears, face, hands and feet in very cold weather
- Use mobile facilities provided for warming up
- Drink warm fluids such as soup or hot drinks
- Make sure you have regular rest breaks
- Avoid touching cold metal surfaces with bare skin

temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults

- Try to keep relaxed and positive – make sure you get enough sleep, take time out for yourself and talk about anything that is bothering you. A problem shared is often a problem halved
- Travel safely – check your car before you travel in cold weather and make sure you buckle up
- Handle and prepare food safely following good hygiene advice
- Ensure you have all your health checks and vaccinations if you are travelling abroad
- Eat and drink in moderation and keep active – try to do 150 minutes exercise per week as recommended by the British Heart Foundation.



- Make sure your work equipment is prepared, e.g. complete vehicle checks before driving
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your co-workers.

