

Tackling your alcohol problem can be hard work, but it pays off in the end by making a difference across all aspects of your life.

## Helpful organisations

### National

Drinkline - The National Alcohol Helpline  
0800 917 8282 - (England and Wales, Mon -Fri, 9am -11pm)  
Drinkline offers free, confidential information and advice on alcohol.

### Local

Sources of advice for young people with drug and alcohol issues:

Bath and North East Somerset: [Project 28](#) 01225 463344

North & West Wilts: [Motiv 8](#) 01225 793616

You will be contacted by our CAMHS team who are based at:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service  
Temple House, Temple Court, Keynsham, BS31 1HA  
Tel: 0117 360 4040

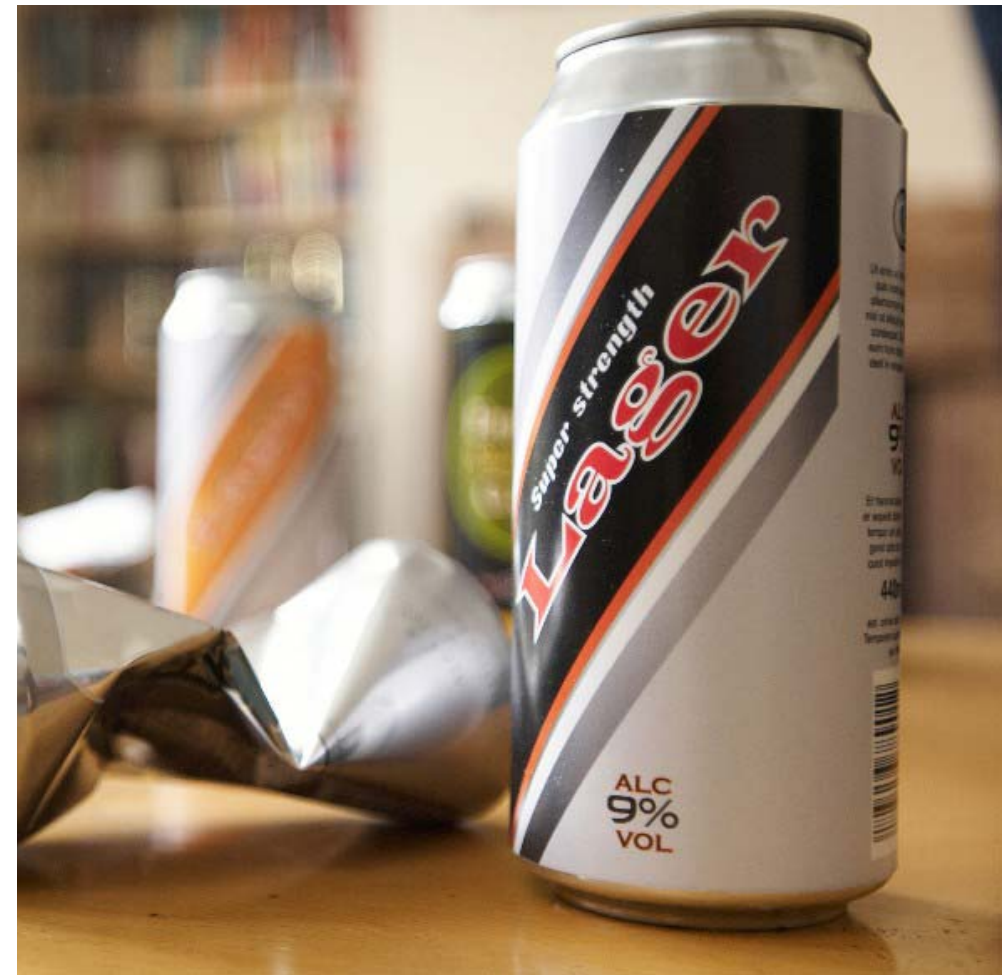
This is just to check that there are no other concerns and to offer sources of advice if necessary to help.

This leaflet has been adapted from a full version with the permission of the Royal College of Psychiatrists: full version available at:  
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/problems/alcoholanddrugs/alcoholourfavouritealcohol.aspx>

**RUH**

Information for Patients

## Alcohol advice for teenagers



## This leaflet explains:

- What bad effects alcohol can have
- Safe drinking guidelines
- Where to access local help

**It is illegal for those under 18 to drink in public or buy alcohol. It is illegal for older people to buy alcohol for younger ones.**

People drink alcohol to feel relaxed and enjoy life – but drinking too much at any age can cause serious problems.

In fact, alcohol causes much more harm than illegal drugs like heroin and cannabis. Alcohol is the cause of many hospital admissions for physical illnesses and accidents and you are in hospital because you have been poisoned by drinking too much alcohol.

### Problems with alcohol

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Many of these problems are caused by having too much to drink at the wrong place or time. Alcohol affects your judgment, so you do things you wouldn't normally think of. It makes you less aware of risks and so more vulnerable. You may get into dangerous situations that are difficult to deal with.

### Problems with alcohol - physical health

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Being very drunk can lead to severe hangovers, stomach pains (gastritis), vomiting blood, unconsciousness and even death. In the longer term we know that we now see many young adults who are

suffering badly from the effects of drinking too much – they develop a liver disease called cirrhosis. This is an extremely unpleasant disease.

### Problems with alcohol - mental health

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Although we tend to think of alcohol as something we use to make us feel good, heavy drinking can bring on depression. Many people who commit suicide have had drinking problems. Alcohol can stop your memory from working properly and can cause brain damage. It can even make you hear noises and voices - a very unpleasant experience which can be hard to get rid of.

### How much alcohol is too much?

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Some drinks are stronger than others. The easiest way to work out how much we are drinking is to count 'units' of alcohol. 1 unit is 10mls of alcohol - the amount in a standard pub measure of spirits, a half pint of normal strength beer or lager, or a small glass of wine.

If a man and woman of the same weight drink the same amount of alcohol, the woman will have a much higher amount in her bodily organs than the man. So, unfair as it may seem, the safe limit is lower for women (14 units per week) than for men (21 units per week). Young people have a less well developed liver and so smaller amounts of alcohol can cause them more problems than an adult.

How much you drink at one time is also important. These 'safe limits' assume that our drinking is spread out through the week. In any one day, it is best for a man to drink no more than 4 units and for a woman to drink no more than 3 units. Drinking over 8 units in a day for men, or 6 units for women, is known as 'binge drinking'.