

ALCOHOL



The coronavirus pandemic is affecting everyone's life and many people are struggling to maintain good mental health. Our well-being is suffering due to living under coronavirus restrictions for a prolonged period and having to deal with the uncertainties and challenges the pandemic created in our lives. Some of us feel the impact more than others.

Whilst we all have different coping strategies, some people use drink. Drinking alcohol can make us feel more relaxed and happier initially however regular heavy drinking leads to worsening of mental health problems. Furthermore, many people develop low mood and anxiety because of drinking. Regular drinking can also negatively affect sleep, lead to a weight gain, make existing mental health problems worse and increase the risk of serious physical health conditions such as liver disease, heart disease, cancer, or stroke. Drinking every day can lead to having a permanent hangover affecting our ability to concentrate and stay motivated.

To keep health risks from alcohol low, it is recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week and have alcohol free days in between. 14 units of alcohol is the equivalent to six pints of average strength beer or seven glasses of wine. This guidance applies to both men and women. If you are dependent on alcohol, stopping drinking suddenly is dangerous. Please speak to your GP who will be able to go through available support options with you.

By sticking to the recommended levels, you will experience many health benefits:

Better quality sleep

Many people drink to help them sleep. What not many realise is that the quality of their sleep is affected by drinking. This then results in feeling tired during the day. Having better quality sleep will help you to feel more energised during the day.

Weight loss

Alcohol is very high in calories. Single large glass of wine or a pint of beer contains over 200 calories. Cutting down on alcohol can help you to lose weight.

Improved memory and higher concentration levels

Drinking less alcohol will help you to feel more awake and alert during the day resulting in clearer thinking. In addition, your memory will improve.

Better skin

Alcohol is a diuretic. This means that if you drink alcohol your body may find it hard to hydrate itself. Lack of hydration will make your wrinkles and pores more visible, and your skin will lose its natural healthy glow. By cutting down on alcohol, your skin will look brighter.

Improved mood

Whilst we all have different coping strategies, some people use drink. Drinking alcohol can make us feel more relaxed and happier initially however regular heavy drinking leads to worsening of mental health problems. Furthermore, many people develop low mood and anxiety because of drinking. Regular drinking can also make existing mental health problems worse. Cutting down on alcohol will have positive impact on your nervous system and will put you in a better mood.

If you or someone you care about is affected by drinking, there is a lot of help available:

Adfam

Works with families affected by drugs and alcohol. Website: adfam.org.uk.

Al-Anon

Provides support to anyone who is or has been affected by someone else's drinking.

Telephone: **0800 0086 861** (open 10am to 10pm 365 days a year),
email: helpline@al-anonuk.org.uk.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Supports recovery and continued sobriety of individuals.

Telephone number: **0800 917 7650**, email: help@aamail.com.

Drinkline

Offers free confidential telephone support for those concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Telephone number: **0300 123 1110** (open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm, Saturday and Sunday 11am to 4pm).

Matrix Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service

Provides help, support, and advice to young people under 18 living in South Tyneside, their families and carers.

Telephone: **0191 497 5637**, email: enquiries@ypmatrix.org

National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA)

Provides information, advice, and support for anyone affected by a parent's drinking.

Telephone: **0800 358 3456**, email: helpline@Nacoa.org.uk.

South Tyneside Adult Recovery Service

Service for adults affected by substance abuse who live in South Tyneside.

Telephone: **0191 917 1160** (open 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday),
email: humankind.st-spoc@nhs.net