

# Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs can temporarily change how you feel but over time they may affect your overall wellbeing. They can disrupt sleep, lower energy and impact mood and concentration. Cutting down or avoiding them can improve your mental and physical health and wellbeing.

## Recommendations for Adults

- Limit or avoid substances like alcohol, recreational drugs, and tobacco.
- If you consume alcoholic drinks, follow NHS guidance of no more than 14 units per week spread across several days, with alcohol free days.
- However, World Cancer Research Fund says: 'Limit alcohol consumption. For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol.'
- Seek professional support if needed to cut down or quit.

## Suggestions or ideas

- Choose alcohol-free drinks, avoid environments where drugs are present, try smoke-free zones.
- Track your units, set personal limits, plan social activities that don't involve drinking.
- Contact your GP, NHS Stop Smoking services and local drug and alcohol support services and groups.

## PAUSE & REFLECT

## THE EVIDENCE

- Alcohol use contributes to poor sleep, which in turn worsens low mood and anxiety (Ebrahim et al., 2013).
- Drug misuse is strongly linked with mental health problems, including depression (Public Health England, 2017).
- Using NHS stop-smoking services makes you up to three times more likely to quit for good (NHS stop smoking services help you quit NHS, 2022).

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

Use this checklist to explore the benefits of cutting down or quitting alcohol, cigarettes and/or drugs. Tick the ones that matter most to you.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel more positive and improve mood.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Have more energy for daily life.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Think more clearly and focus better.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Support a healthy weight.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen relationships.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve memory and concentration.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce risk of accidents or legal issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> Lower blood pressure.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Save money.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen your immune system.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel more in control.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce risk of serious illnesses (heart disease, cancer, liver disease, lung disease). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep better and wake feeling refreshed.  |   |

WHERE TO START

You could start by filling in 'My plan' or try any of the following:

- **Smoking:** For general information, free apps and tips: [nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking](https://nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking)
- **Smoking:** For phone, one to one or group support in your area and a tool to calculate money saved if you stop smoking: [smokefreesomerset.org.uk](https://smokefreesomerset.org.uk)
- **Alcohol:** For general information, free apps and tips: [nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less](https://nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less)
- **Alcohol:** Alcohol calorie counter tool: [wcrf.org/living-well/eating-well/alcohol-calorie-calculator/](https://wcrf.org/living-well/eating-well/alcohol-calorie-calculator/)
- **Alcohol:** For advice on calculating alcohol units: [nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units](https://nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units)
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** For one to one or group support tailored to your needs: [turning-point.co.uk](https://turning-point.co.uk)



NHS Better Health  
Quit Smoking



Turning Point  
Drugs and Alcohol Support