

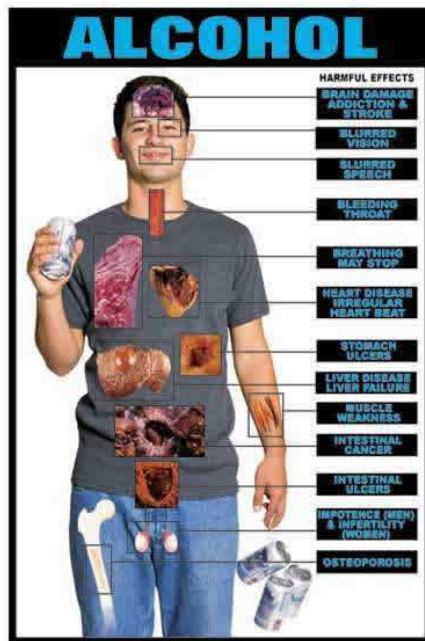
## The Effects of Alcohol



### Pre-reading

Do you think that alcoholic drinks should carry health warnings?

Can you remember any diseases which are associated with alcohol abuse?



**Read the text below and after that match the paragraphs with the suggested headlines.**

1.

The chemical term for alcohol is ethyl alcohol. It is formed from fermented fruit, vegetables or grains in which the plants' sugars are converted into ethyl alcohol. The different types and strengths of alcohol depend on the plant used and the amount of water added to the end product.

2.

Alcohol is a depressant which affects the Central Nervous System in our bodies. When alcohol reaches the brain it can cause any number of reactions. Slurred speech, distorted vision and loss of balance are just a few examples.

3.

The amount of alcohol that a person can safely imbibe before it starts taking its toll on the body depends on a number of factors. These include such things as sex, body weight, previous exposure to alcohol and whether the person has eaten or not. Women have a lower tolerance than men to alcohol because in general they have lower body weights and so they take in more alcohol per kilo.

4.

One unit of alcohol is about half a pint of beer. One pint of strong lager is three units of alcohol. A standard glass of wine is two units and one measure of a spirit is one unit. In the UK guidelines recommend that men do not drink more than three or four units a day. For women the recommended limit is two or three units.

5.

Most people feel relaxed with a small quantity of alcohol and some people might feel less anxiety and stress. However, with a relatively small intake physical coordination can be affected and speech can become slurred. Binge drinking has far more serious effects and can lead to unconsciousness or even death.

6.

Excess drinking over a period of time can cause endless diseases and can aggravate existing diseases. Typical diseases associated with alcohol abuse are cirrhosis of the liver, throat cancer and heart failure. Excess drinking can also cause high blood pressure, obesity, muscle disease and skin problems.

7.

If you think you are drinking too much alcohol and are wondering how to cut down, you have already taken an important first step – recognising that you might have a problem. Experts advise going out later so that you start drinking later, having a couple of alcohol-free days each week, buying drinks with a lower alcohol content or alternating beer with a non-alcoholic drink. They also recommend looking for other ways to relax.

**A How does it affect us?**

**B What is a unit of alcohol and how many can we safely drink?**

**C How much is too much?**

**D What are the short term consequences of alcohol abuse?**

**E What is alcohol?**

**F How can we consume less alcohol?**

**G And the long term consequences?**

**Decide whether the sentences are true (T) or false (F). Write T or F next to it.**

1. The strength of a particular type of alcohol partly depends on which plant it has been made from.
2. A person's weight has a direct effect on how s/he reacts to alcohol.
3. Alcohol affects men and women in the same way.
4. Binge drinking can be fatal.
5. Drinking too much alcohol has no effect on one's weight.
6. Admitting you have a drink problem is an important first step to dealing with it.

**Answers:**

**Headlines**

- Paragraph 1 What is alcohol?
- Paragraph 2 How does it affect us?
- Paragraph 3 How much is too much?
- Paragraph 4 What is a unit of alcohol and how many can we safely drink?
- Paragraph 5 What are the short term consequences of alcohol abuse?
- Paragraph 6 And the long term consequences?
- Paragraph 7 How can we consume less alcohol?

**True/False**

1T, 2T, 3F, 4T, 5F, 6T