

Alcohol

LEGAL STATUS: Legal

But *illegal* for under 18 year-olds to buy alcohol in a pub or off-licence.

(See reference to laws on alcohol, p9)

Worth knowing...

- Long-term use can lead to a range of serious physical illnesses
- Half a pint of ordinary beer or a single measure of spirits contain one unit of alcohol each (see additional examples below right)
- Mixing alcohol with other drugs, including cold remedies and tranquillisers, can be highly dangerous
- Young males and females have different drinking patterns.

OTHER NAMES/SLANG:

Booze, bewy, pop.

USUALLY FOUND AS:

Liquid.

HOW IT'S TAKEN:

In liquid form.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE USE:

Empty cans and bottles; bottles of spirits that have been diluted with water.

EFFECTS ON USER:

Makes users more relaxed and sociable. Slurred speech, loss of self-control, exaggerated emotional reactions ranging from happy to aggressive depending on the situation and the type of person. Excess can make a user fall asleep or become unconscious.

Alcohol consumption is commonly measured in units, and there are guidelines about the sensible limits on the number of units that men and women can drink. The Department of Health currently recommends that men should not regularly drink more than three or four units a day, and women should not regularly drink more than two or three units a day.

It is worth remembering that a 'unit' can be hard to envisage, as the volume of drink and its alcohol concentration will vary with the type of drink – beer, wine, spirit – and the particular strength of the brand or variety. Some wines, beers and spirits are stronger than other makes or brands. The alcoholic strength of a drink is shown on the label on the bottle or the side of the can or other packaging as a percentage of Alcohol by Volume (ABV).

For example:

- A half pint of normal strength (3-3.5%) lager contains 1 unit (1 pint therefore contains 2 units)
- A pint of stronger beer or lager can contain 3 units
- A 275ml bottle of 5.5% alcopop contains 1.5 units
- A 175ml glass of 12% wine contains 2 units
- A single measure of spirits (40%) contains 1 unit.



'Drugs' refers to all drugs, including medicines, volatile substances, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.