

FACT OR FICTION QUIZ

How much do you know about alcohol?

It's always possible to sleep off a hangover and feel all right the next day - FALSE

Too much alcohol is dehydrating and can lead to headaches, being sick and feeling bad. This can last for a lot longer than just the morning after. Good advice for adults is to eat while or before drinking and to pace with soft drinks to prevent a hangover. If they have drunk a lot, they shouldn't drink alcohol for another 48 hours to allow the liver and body recover.

Adding fruit juice or mixers to spirits reduces the effect of the alcohol - FALSE

Adding mixers will make the alcohol taste less strong and will give a longer drink – but the drink will still contain the same amount of alcohol. Having a longer drink should make the drink last longer though, so adding ice and plenty of mixer is good move.

It's impossible to know how much alcohol is in a bottle of drink - FALSE

The amount of alcohol is usually shown on the back of drinks containers, but it can also be calculated. The number of units will vary according to the strength of drink and size of glass but as a guide:

- ½ pint average strength beer or cider = 1 unit
- 1 shot spirits = 1 unit
- Medium glass of wine = 2 units
- 1 pint average strength beer/cider OR double vodka = 2 units

The UK Government advises that adult men and women drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread over several days. There are no safe limits for those under 18.

A glass of beer, a glass of wine and a shot of spirits contain the same amount of pure alcohol - FALSE

It depends on the size of the glass, the strength of the drink (e.g. there are strong beers and weaker beers) and how full the glass is. As a guide:

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If someone drinks alcohol on a full stomach they will get less drunk - TRUE

Eating before or while drinking is a good idea as food slows down the rate alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream. This gives the liver more time to break down the alcohol as it is released more slowly into the body. Remember, the adult liver can only break down one unit an hour and nothing can speed that up.

The best advice is to eat before or while drinking, and to pace drinking by alternating with soft drinks or water between alcoholic drinks.

Drinking plenty of water may reduce the effect of a hangover - TRUE

Many of the effects of a hangover come about because alcohol dehydrates the body. There is no cure and waiting until it has gone is the only thing someone can do. However, eating before or while drinking, pacing with soft drinks, drinking plenty of water before bed and keeping off alcohol for at least the next 48 hours helps the body to recover.

People are more likely to take risks after drinking alcohol - TRUE

Alcohol affects judgement, reactions, coordination and decision making so, when drinking too much, and especially binge drinking, people have fewer inhibitions and increase their risk of being in fights, having an accident, injury or being sexually assaulted, for example.

People who drink a lot of alcohol on a regular basis can become addicted - TRUE

Someone who regularly drinks an excessive amount of alcohol may have to drink even more to get the same effect, and this can lead to addiction. Signs include:

- Drinking on own or secretly
- Feeling unable to get through a day without alcohol
- Feeling unable to stop drinking once started
- Experiencing tremors and shakes without alcohol,

3% of adults are classed as dependent drinkers or alcoholics.

Alcohol affects everyone in the same way - FALSE

A person's size, weight, health and age, whether they are male or female as well as how quickly and when they drink (with food or on an empty tummy) will all determine how alcohol affects them.

Drinking on an empty stomach or drinking fast, results in alcohol rushing into the bloodstream faster, so the effects of alcohol are felt more quickly. Being very tired, ill or stressed, being on medications or taking drugs may also affect a person's reaction to alcohol.

Pregnant women are advised not to drink alcohol - TRUE

As alcohol crosses the placenta and circulates in a foetus's blood stream there is no safe level of drinking when pregnant. If someone drinks heavily during pregnancy this can cause permanent harm to the developing baby. This is called FAS (Foetal Alcohol Syndrome) and life-long problems include:

- Facial deformities and small head size
- Behaviour problems (prone to hyperactivity and lack of concentration)
- Abnormal appearance,
- Poor coordination
- Low intelligence

Drinking a lot of alcohol affects your health - TRUE

If someone drinks a lot in a short space of time they can increase the risk of accidents and injury. In high doses it can result in alcohol poisoning, leading to coma or even death. In the long term, drinking a lot of alcohol regularly can lead to numerous diseases, such as cancer and liver disease. These can be fatal.

Adults can drink whatever they like - FALSE

There are times when drinking any alcohol can be dangerous for adults. Alcohol slows down judgement and reaction times and affects coordination. This can be very dangerous in certain situations, such as driving, which is why there are strict laws about how much alcohol can be in the blood of a person when they drive. For someone to be confident that they are under the legal limit, it's best that they avoid any alcohol before driving. Alcohol should also be avoided if operating machinery or working at a height.

Pregnant women should avoid drinking because alcohol affects the developing baby. Alcohol can also be dangerous for people who are swimming, doing active sport or taking medication.

The more someone drinks, the happier they feel - FALSE

Although alcohol can make adults feel relaxed and happy if they don't drink too much, the more people drink the worse they will feel as alcohol is dehydrating. They are also more likely to get angry violent or tearful if they get drunk.

It's really rare for 13 year-olds to have been drunk - TRUE

In England 8% for 13 year old girls and 5% for 13 year old boys report having been drunk at least twice. For 11 year-olds it is roughly 1%.

The decisions a person makes when socialising with friends can influence whether they have an enjoyable time and keep safe - TRUE

The decisions that a person takes when out socialising and getting home afterwards can affect other people including friends. When someone has been drinking, they are much more likely to make high risk decisions or behave out of character. This can include putting themselves and others at risk of physical harm or by behaving in a way that upsets those around them.

If a teenager is as big as the average adult, it would be safe to drink alcohol even if they are under age - FALSE

Although a teenager's body may look like a fully grown adult, the liver and the brain are still not fully developed, so drinking is especially harmful at this age.

It's legal for someone who is under age to ask an adult to buy alcohol for them - FALSE

This is called buying by proxy and can get friends or siblings over 18 into a lot of trouble – an £80 fine or caution by the police! Young people can drink alcohol at home with parental permission under the age of 18. It is also legal to have a glass of beer wine or cider with a plated meal in a restaurant if age 16 or older and with an adult over the age of 18.

Most teenagers under 16 haven't even tried alcohol - TRUE

6 in 10 11-15 year-olds haven't even tried alcohol – and when they do, it tends to be with the family or relatives on a special occasion – not at a party. The truth is, it's not really cool for older teenagers to get drunk any more, binge drinking has halved over the last ten years in the UK – most adults want to enjoy a drink or two as part of the evening and not let too much spoil it.

If someone stops drinking alcohol and switch to soft drinks or coffee they'll will be OK to drive after an hour - FALSE

Coffee or water may make someone feel better, but this doesn't affect the amount of alcohol in the blood stream – only time can break down the alcohol – about one unit – (a shot or half pint) and hour. So an adult could be over the drink drive limit the next morning if they've drunk a lot the night before.

The liver breaks down most of the alcohol in the body - TRUE

The liver has lots of functions, and one is to break down toxins from alcohol into water and CO₂, but it can only get rid of 1 unit an hour – if someone drinks more or quickly the rest of the alcohol will circulate around the body, brain and organs until the liver has had time to do its job. If someone drinks too much alcohol for a number of years it also damages the liver and stops it working properly which can result in alcoholic liver disease, which can be fatal.

Drinking too much only harms the drinker. It's no one else's problem - FALSE

As drinking too much affects the drinkers judgement coordination, reactions and inhibitions, they are likely to behave in a way that puts other people at risk of harm.

Everyone our age drinks alcohol at parties - FALSE

3 in 10 16 to 24 year-olds in Britain choose not to drink alcohol - this might be for health, religious or other reasons. Of those who do drink, 80% choose not to get drunk by pacing their drinks and not drinking too much. There are plenty of drinks to choose from that are low alcohol or alcohol free so people can socialise, have a great time and still feel fine the next day.