

Introduction

- Drinking alcohol could increase your risk of having another stroke.
- Drinking any alcohol has some level of risk. There is no safe amount to drink. However, you can lower your risk by staying within the recommended limit.
- Alcohol can increase the impact of symptoms caused by your stroke including: changes to speech, thinking, vision and balance.
- If fatigue is an issue for you, alcohol may make it worse.
- The Dept. of Health guidelines for safe drinking are 2-3 units a day, up to a maximum of 14 units per week for both men and women. With at least 2 drink free days per week.
- *In a typical week, about 1 in 4 men and 1 in 7 women drink in excess of the safe drinking guidelines.
- Heavy drinking (5 units or more a day) is associated with increased risk of both haemorrhagic and ischaemic stroke.
- Large quantities of alcohol causes an increase in blood pressure, a major stroke risk factor. This includes a single alcoholic binge (6 units or more of alcohol in one sitting).
- There is some research that reports small amounts of alcohol (e.g. 1 unit of wine per day) may slightly reduce the risk of stroke.

*[Scottish Health Survey (2018), revised 2020]





How much do you drink?





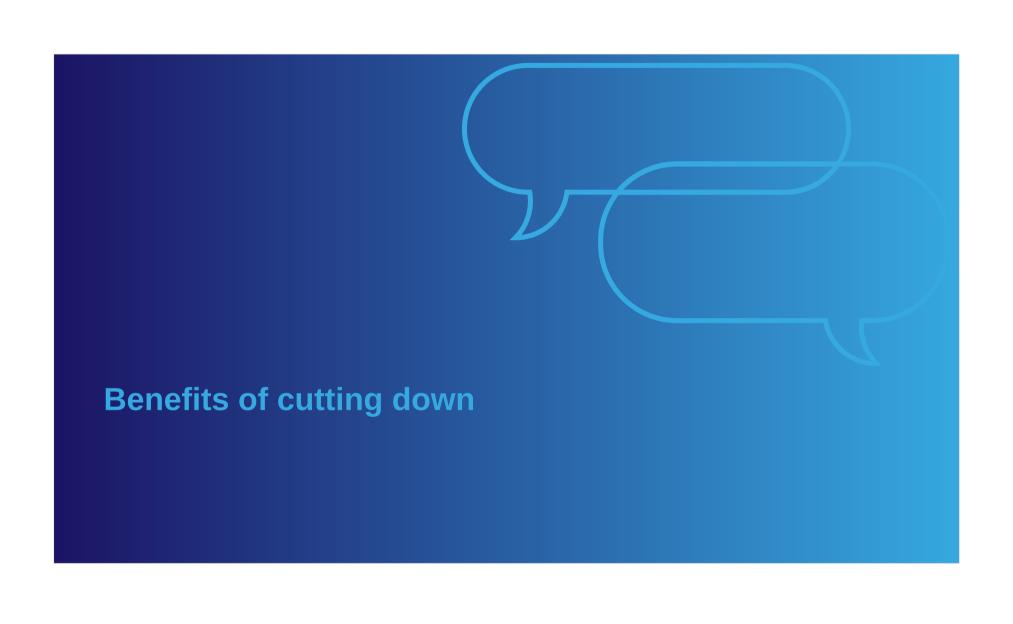
What is a Unit of Alcohol?

- A unit of alcohol is a measure of the amount of alcohol there is in your drink.
- The size and strength of your drink determines how many units it contains. The strength of alcohol is measured by the percentage of alcohol by volume (% ABV).
- In the UK one unit is 10ml of pure (100% ABV) alcohol. This is equivalent to:
- 76ml of standard strength wine (13% ABV)
- 250ml (or just under half a pint) of beer (4% ABV)
- 25ml of spirit (40% ABV)
- You can calculate the units in any drink by using the following method.
 Strength (ABV) x Volume (ml) 1000 = Units eg. 4.7% x 330 ml = 1551 1000 = 1.551 units.



Medications and alcohol after stroke

- Warfarin, used as a Blood Thinner (anticoagulant) can be affected by alcohol consumption, some foods, certain fruit juices and herbal medicines
- Changes in your drinking habits, adding supplement or radically changing your diet should be discussed with your doctor or nurse first
- Heavy or binge drinking of 6 or more units can increase your blood pressure, so should be avoided
- FOR YOUR SAFETY ALWAYS CARRY YOUR ANTICOAGULANT CARD and inform health professionals of their use



The benefits of cutting down

Drinking less can have a positive effect on your overall health and wellbeing. Some of the benefits of cutting down include:



Information used to create this resource

Information used to create this resource has been taken with kind permission from:

- https://www.chss.org.uk/documents/2019/10/e7 alcohol.pdf
- https://www.chss.org.uk/stroke-information-and-support/reducing-your-risk-ofstroke/moderate-alcohol-after-stroke/
- https://www.chss.org.uk/chest-information-and-support/looking-after-yourself/alcohol/
- https://www.chsselearning.org.uk/advancing-modules/topic-loops/alcohol/

Other websites are also referred to/signposted in this resource including:

- https://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/
- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units/
- https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/

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The following organisations contributed to this presentation

