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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 3pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for December 2021

1. What is Dry January?
2. Who organises it?
3. How many people took on the challenge in 2021?
4. Why should I take up the challenge?
5. How many people saved money?
6. What are the short-term risks of alcohol misuse?
7. What are the long-term risks?
8. Can alcohol affect my mental health?
9. Why is that a problem?
10. How would I know if I'm drinking too much alcohol?



Answers on the bottom of page two

What is Dry January?

Dry January was developed by the charity Alcohol Change UK to help people appreciate the dangers of excessive drinking and realise that they can manage without alcohol for a month. Every hour someone dies as a result of alcohol and Alcohol Change UK want to reduce the harm drinking causes.

Dry January started in 2013 with 4000 people but each year more and more people take up the challenge. In 2021, 6.5 million decided to go alcohol free for the month of January. Will you be one of those people in January 2022? You may wonder why you should join. Let's go over the reasons:

- You will notice your skin gets brighter, your wallet fuller (86% of participants said they saved money), your waistline slimmer, your days busier, your mind calmer and your nights sleepier
- Research by the Royal Free Hospital

found that a month off alcohol, lowers blood pressure, reduces diabetic risk, lowers cholesterol and reduces levels of cancer related proteins in the blood.

- The real magic happens when January is over as research from the University of Sussex found that 6 months after Dry January, 70% of people taking part were still drinking healthily.

What are the other risks to drinking too much?

The short-term risks of alcohol misuse include:

- Accidents and injuries requiring hospital treatment such as head injury
- Violent behaviour and being a victim of violence
- Unprotected sex that could potentially lead to unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections
- Loss of personal possessions such as wallets, keys or mobile phones

- Alcohol poisoning – this may lead to vomiting, fits and falling unconscious. People who binge drink (drink heavily over a short period of time) are more likely to behave recklessly and are at greater risk of being in an accident. Persistent alcohol misuse increases your risk of serious health conditions including:

- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Stroke
- ◆ Liver disease
- ◆ Liver cancer
- ◆ Bowel cancer
- ◆ Mouth cancer
- ◆ Breast cancer
- ◆ Pancreatitis

As well as causing serious health problems, long term alcohol misuse can lead to social problems for some people such as unemployment, divorce, domestic abuse and homelessness. If someone loses control over their drinking and has an excessive desire to drink, it's known as dependent drinking.

Can alcohol affect my mental health?

Yes, it can, although in small doses alcohol can make you feel quite cheerful because when we drink alcohol our bodies produce more dopamine (a happy hormone) - which makes us want to drink more. However, if we continue to drink, the dopamine high will be pushed aside by the less pleasant effects of alcohol – confusion, clumsiness, nausea and dehydration.

In the longer term your body becomes used to the dopamine boost from alcohol and starts to make less dopamine to compensate. So, if drinking becomes a habit, we may become dopamine deficient which could contribute to us experiencing low mood.

Alcohol is also commonly used to manage stress and anxiety particularly in social circumstances since it increases the production of dopamine and serotonin, another “happy hormone”. But long-term drinking can lower

levels of both these hormones leading to worse anxiety.

How do I know if I'm drinking too much alcohol?

You could be misusing alcohol if:

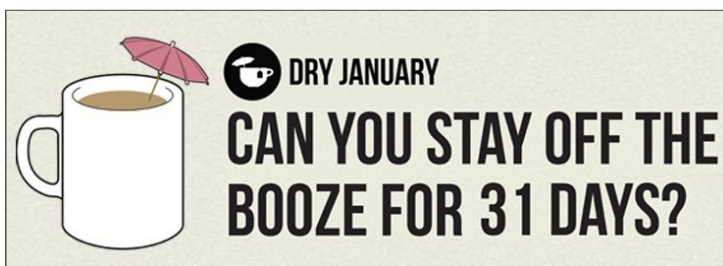
- * You feel you should cut down on your drinking
- * Other people have been criticising your drinking
- * You feel guilty about your drinking
- * You need a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover.

Someone you know may be misusing alcohol if:

- ◇ They regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week
- ◇ They're sometimes unable to remember what happened the night before because of their drinking
- ◇ They fail to do what is expected of them as a result of their drinking e.g. missing an appointment or work because they're drunk or have a hangover

If you are concerned about your drinking or someone else's, a good first step is to see your GP. They will be able to discuss services and treatments available.

For more information about this or any other health condition please talk to one of our trained team.



Answers: Q1, It's the UK's number one, month alcohol free challenge. Q2, The charity Alcohol Change UK. Q3, 6.5 million. Q4, It may result in you being in a better mood, sleeping more soundly, having a shrinking waistline, saving money, having brighter skin, a stronger immune system and having a new relationship with alcohol. Q5, 86%. Q6, Accidents, violent behaviour, unprotected sex, loss of personal possessions, alcohol poisoning. Q7, Heart disease, stroke, liver disease, liver, bowel, mouth and breast cancer and pancreatitis. Q8, Yes. Many of us drink to help manage stress, anxiety, depression or other mental health issues. Q9, Though alcohol will give you an initial feeling of euphoria, this will fade, and you will feel worse than before. Q10, You feel you should cut down, people have criticised your drinking, you feel guilty about your drinking, you need a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover.