

Skeltons Chemists

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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 1pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for December 2024

1. How many people had alcohol related deaths in the UK in 2022?
2. What is the estimated number of dependent drinkers in England?
3. How many are receiving treatment?
4. What is the most common cause of liver disease?
5. What percentage of people in the UK drink alcohol in a way that could harm their liver?
6. Do you have to be addicted to alcohol to get ARLD?
7. What are the stages of ARLD?
8. What are the symptoms of ARLD?
9. How do I know if I am drinking too much?
10. How do I prevent ARLD?



Answers on the bottom of P2

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Alcohol related liver disease (ARLD)

Excessive alcohol is one of the major causes of death in the UK. In 2022 10,048 people had alcohol related deaths. In 2024 the estimated number of dependent drinkers in England is 602,391 of which only 18% are receiving treatment. This means many of them are potentially going to suffer from alcohol related liver disease. This is a condition where your liver has been damaged by alcohol. You don't have to be addicted to alcohol to develop this condition, regularly drinking over the guideline amounts can put you at risk. Up to 1 in 5 people in the



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UK drink alcohol in a way that could harm their liver.

It is a lot easier to over drink than people think. The safe drinking limits are the same for men and women:

- Drink no more than 14 units a week
- Spread your drinking over several days
- Have 2-3 days without alcohol every week, it is best if they are next to each other.

There are also other factors that can increase your risk of liver damage, if you drink too much alcohol:

- ◆ A weight in the overweight or obese range
- ◆ Having diabetes (mainly type 2)
- ◆ Being female -

- ♦ women are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of alcohol than men.
- ♦ Having a pre-existing liver condition such as hepatitis C
- ♦ Genetics - alcohol related diseases and addiction often run in families

What are the stages of ARLD?

There are three stages to ARLD:

- 1) Alcohol related fatty liver - drinking over 4 units of alcohol per day will lead to some build-up of fat in your liver. Your liver breaks down the alcohol but some of the by-products are toxic and damage your liver. If you stop drinking completely for months or years, your liver can recover
- 2) Alcohol related hepatitis - this is very serious, and about a third of heavy drinkers with alcohol related fatty liver will start to develop it. It normally occurs after years of drinking too much, but it can develop very suddenly and severely, even after you've stopped drinking. It can also happen if you drink a lot of alcohol over a short period of time (binge drinking). This is called acute alcohol related hepatitis and can result in liver failure and death.
- 3) Cirrhosis - this is the most serious stage of ARLD when the liver has a lot of severe scarring (fibrosis). Up to 1 in 5 heavy drinkers will develop cirrhosis. It is really important you are referred to a liver specialist if you have one of these serious forms of liver damage.

Symptoms

The early symptoms of ARLD are often quite vague such as:

- * Abdominal pain
- * Loss of appetite
- * Fatigue
- * Feeling sick
- * Diarrhoea
- * Feeling generally unwell

Advanced symptoms include:

- ♦ Yellowing of the skin
- ♦ Swelling in your legs, ankles and feet
- ♦ Swelling in your abdomen

- ♦ A very high temperature and shivering attacks
- ♦ Very itchy skin
- ♦ Hair loss
- ♦ Unusually curved fingertips and nails (clubbed fingers)
- ♦ Blotchy red palms
- ♦ Significant weight loss
- ♦ Weakness and muscle wasting
- ♦ Confusion and memory loss, trouble sleeping, changes in your personality
- ♦ Passing black tarry poo and vomiting blood due to internal bleeding
- ♦ A tendency to bleed and bruise easily
- ♦ Increased sensitivity to alcohol and drugs

How to tell if you are drinking too much

A good way to assess your history and pattern of drinking is to use a short test known as the CAGE test which consists of four questions.

1. Have you ever thought you should cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people annoyed you by criticising your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever drunk an "eye-opener" which means, have you ever drunk alcohol first thing in the morning to get over a hang over and steady your nerves?

If you answer "yes" to one or more of these questions, you may have an alcohol problem and are advised to see your GP.

If you would like to cut down on your drinking, it may be a good idea to take up the Dry January challenge. This is where you have 31 days alcohol free for a total body and mind reset. 131,266 people took up the challenge in January 2022 with 86% saying they saved money, 70% had better sleep and 66% had more energy. If you want to join, sign up on the alcoholchange.org.uk website.

For more information about this or any health concern you have, have a chat with one of our trained team