

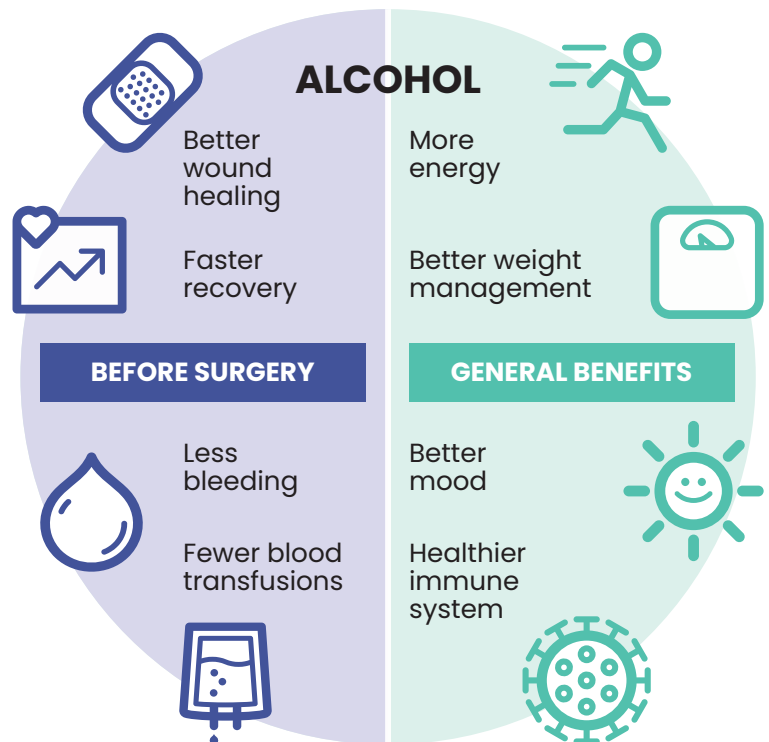
## WHY REDUCE YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE?

Our aim is the same as yours, to get you safely through your operation and experience a smooth and quick recovery.

The UK Government recommends that you drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week to stay in safe drinking limits. The table at the end of this leaflet explains how many units are in different types and measures of alcoholic drinks.

Alcohol can be hazardous to your health. It also affects the way your body responds to surgery.

**Benefits of cutting down your alcohol intake include** ➔



## REGULARLY DRINKING MORE THAN 3 UNITS PER DAY:

- Can reduce the body's ability to fight infection, which can prolong your hospital stay and your overall recovery. Reducing the amount you drink will help reduce the risk and improve your chances of a smooth recovery.
- Can weaken the heart which affects the ability to provide oxygen to your body via the blood stream. Reducing your drinking before surgery can therefore improve your hearts ability to deliver oxygen and improve healing.
- Can reduce your liver function and its ability to deal with drugs and painkillers used during your operation. Reducing your drinking means your liver can handle these drugs better so you have a lower chance of experiencing any side effects like nausea and vomiting.

## CUTTING DOWN BEFORE SURGERY

- The more you drink, the higher your risk of complications with surgery, so reducing your alcohol consumption by any amount will help to reduce your risk. The aim should be to cut down to safe limits. Try to have alcohol free days every week.
- If you think you are drinking excessively, it's important not to stop suddenly. The aim is to gradually reduce your drinking to safe limits. The PREPWELL team can help guide you. **Ideally we would like to have you drinking within safe limits at least 6-8 weeks before your operation so you obtain maximum benefit.**
- Drinking more than 14 units a week may mean you need more investigations before your operation to assess how well your organs function, such as your liver.

## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

The PREPWELL team will help support you and provide advice to help you reduce your drinking.

Support from medical professionals or people in a similar situation can make reducing your alcohol intake easier and more successful. These people may include:

- **Your GP:** book an appointment and ask about local services and treatments which may include counselling (individual or group) and medications to help manage cravings, nutrition and withdrawal.
- **Pre-assessment clinics:** mention to the team at your pre-assessment appointment.
- **Local support services:** these include services like Alcoholics Anonymous and counselling. These can be found via: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Alcohol-addiction/LocationSearch/1805>

## TOP TIPS

- Make a plan: set limits before drinking and stick to them.
- Set a budget for alcohol.
- Let friends and family know, they can provide support!
- Take one day at a time.
- Drink smaller measures or lower alcohol alternatives.
- Make every other drink a glass of water.
- Have alcohol free days every week.
- Try and drink within safe limits (<14 units per week) for 6-8 weeks before your operation

## USEFUL LINKS

**NHS:** [www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/)  
**Drink aware:** [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

## HOW MUCH DO YOU DRINK?

Below is a rough guide to the alcohol content, in units, of commonly consumed drinks

TYPE	UNITS	CALORIES (APPROX)
Single spirit measure (25mls 40%)	1 unit	50kcal half milky bar
Alcopop (275mls 5%)	1 - 1.5 units	172kcal 2 chocolate digestives
Small glass of wine (175mls 12%)	2.1 units	133kcal 3 jaffa cakes
Large glass of wine (250mls 12%)	3 units	175kcal 4 jaffa cakes
Bottle of beer (330mls 5%)	1.7 units	180kcal 4 jaffa cakes
Can of beer (440mls 5%)	2 units	240kcal 1 mars bar
Pint of normal lager/beer/cider (569mls 3.6%)	2 units	240kcal 1 mars bar