

UK Chief Medical Officers' Alcohol Guidelines Review Summary of the Proposed New Guidelines:

The UK Chief Medical Officers considered and accepted the advice of the independent expert groups and agreed on the following main recommendations:

- A weekly guideline on regular drinking (replacing previous weekly and *daily* guidance) thought to be an easier benchmark to understand as most of the population do not drink alcohol daily
- The weekly guideline now lowers weekly guidance for men as research suggests that the overall health risks are broadly similar for men and women
- Advice on single episodes of drinking (as there is clear evidence that such a pattern of heavy drinking on a small number of days increases risk to health)
- Keeping "several" drink-free days in each week (similar to previous guidance utilised in Scotland of keeping at least 2 alcohol-free days each week)
- A guideline on pregnancy and drinking (bringing the rest of the UK into line with Scotland)

The Chief Medical Officers' proposed alcohol consumption guideline for both men and women is that:

- You are safest not to drink regularly more than 14 units per week, to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level.
- If you do drink as much as 14 units per week, it is best to spread this evenly over 3 days or more. If you have one or two heavy drinking sessions, you increase your risks of death from long term illnesses and from accidents and injuries.
- The risk of developing a range of illnesses (including, for example, cancers of the mouth, throat and breast) increases with any amount you drink on a regular basis.
- If you wish to cut down the amount you're drinking, a good way to help achieve this is to have several drink-free days each week.

The experts considered the evidence from all over the world on the effects of alcohol on health and length of life. Long term health risks arise from regularly drinking alcohol over time – typically over 10 to 20 years or more. This can mean that risks of disease increase and lead to a wide range of illnesses after time, including cancers (where it is now known that risks start from any level of regular drinking and increase with the amount being drunk), strokes, heart disease, liver disease, and damage to the brain and central nervous system.

Furthermore:

- Any benefits of alcohol for heart health only apply for women aged 55 and over with the greatest benefit when women limit their intake to around 5 units a week, equivalent to 2 standard glasses of wine.
- there is no evidence to link drinking alcohol to health benefits

Read more at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/health-risks-from-alcohol-new-guidelines>