Easy steps to make sure your great night out doesn’t end badly

Enjoying Alcohol Safely

For health and wellbeing information go to www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthyu

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Looking forward to your night out? For many students, nights out and enjoying a drink are all part of the university experience. This booklet lists some simple tips to make sure you remember your nights out for all the right reasons. It will help you identify the risks associated with alcohol and contains advice on how to stay safe if you choose to drink.
Knowing your limits

Research shows that 52% of male students and 43% of female students drink more than the daily unit recommendations.

Just in case you don't know what they are, here's a guide:

- Women should not regularly drink more than two to three units a day.
- Men should not regularly drink more than three to four units a day.

It's also a good idea to have at least two alcohol-free days every week.

Another reminder: alcoholic drinks contain lots of calories. A pint of lager contains around 250 calories and a 175ml glass of white wine has about 130 calories.

If you choose to drink, try to stay within safe alcohol limits.
Drinking doesn’t have to mean bingeing

Drinking large quantities of alcohol in a very short time – as part of a drinking game, for example – can be very dangerous. Be aware of your alcohol intake and drink responsibly.

Make sure you don’t get drawn into drinking large quantities of alcohol because of cheap drink promotions and peer pressure.

**Warning:** binge and excessive drinking can have very unwanted side effects.

These may include:
- embarrassment because of something you did or said when you were drunk
- feeling hungover and missing lectures
- handing in work late
- throwing up and not looking or feeling your best
- spending too much money on alcohol and having your bank card refused
- having an accident and injuring yourself or somebody else
- having unprotected sex and contracting a sexually transmitted infection or risking an unplanned pregnancy
- waking up the morning after and not remembering what happened the night before
- being a victim of crime or getting involved in a fight
- getting into a vulnerable/risky situation

Student health and safety are of primary concern at The University of Nottingham.

The University does not encourage excessive drinking and is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of students and reducing the associated risks.

Incidents of drink-related anti-social behavior are taken very seriously under the University’s code of discipline.

**Top tips for staying safe**

1. Don’t walk home alone and stick to well lit streets.
2. Watch your drinks, so that they don’t get spiked.
3. Stay hydrated and ask for water at the bar.
4. Eat before you start drinking.
5. Get money out before the night out.
6. Keep an eye out for those around you, look after your friends and stick together.
The risks and how to reduce them

Drinking moderate amounts of alcohol doesn’t often cause problems – but drinking too much can. Here are some tips to help you stay safe and enjoy your night out.

‘Pre-lashing’ – drinking excessively before you go out

Drinking lots of alcohol before going out could ruin your night out before it starts.

A recent study of 18-35-year-olds undertaken by the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University found that those who pre-lashed:
- were more likely to consume a total of over 20 units on a night out (compare this to the recommended maximum weekly safe level of 14 units for a woman and 21 units for a man!)
- were two-and-a-half times more likely to have been in a fight when going out in the last 12 months

Reduce the risk: try eating before you go out and having your first drink of the night in the club or bar. You’ll still have a great night.

Eating isn’t cheating

Reduce the risk: if your plan is to have a good time make sure you eat something before you go out. You won’t get drunk as quickly which means the evening will last longer and you are less likely to throw up.

Haven’t drunk alcohol before or have drunk very little?

Be careful. Your tolerance won’t be great, and you may find you get drunk quickly.

Reduce the risk: eat before you drink. Don’t be pressured into drinking more than you want to, and start slowly. You can always have a soft drink or drink lower-strength beer/lager or wine. But if you don’t feel like drinking, don’t – chances are you won’t be on your own.

Alcohol and weight gain

Alcohol often contains lots of calories. If you regularly drink more than the recommended amounts you are likely to gain weight.

Alcohol and money

Spend too much on alcohol and you won’t have much money left for other activities.

Reduce the risk: planning in advance always helps.

Steer clear of rounds and large groups as they usually work out more expensive. Only take out a set amount of money to spend on alcohol and keep your drinking money separate.
Risk-taking, staying safe and getting home
Alcohol can affect your ability to make decisions and increases the chance of engaging in risky behaviour. This may put you at greater risk of injuring yourself, having unprotected sex and becoming involved in a criminal offence.

**Reduce the risk:** make sure you have enough credit on your mobile phone in case you get stranded. Either designate a driver or store the numbers of licensed taxis in your phone before you go out. Don’t drink and drive and make sure you get into a licensed taxi cab.

Look out for your friends and make sure they do the same for you; if anyone gets into difficulties don’t hesitate to call 999. If you are on campus, call security on 0115 951 8888.

Alcohol and violence
Drinking may put you at greater risk of losing your temper, causing you to overreact in certain situations which can lead to aggressive behaviour. Being drunk can also make you a victim of crime as you are more likely to be seen as an easy target for robbery and assault.

**Reduce the risk:** drink sensibly. Try to be aware of your surroundings and keep your possessions hidden.

Alcohol and social networking sites
According to Drinkaware, over a third of 18–24-year-olds admit to experiencing ‘cyber shame’—regretting something they’ve posted online when drunk on a night out. Not surprisingly a large proportion admitted to un-tagging drunk pictures of themselves.

**Reduce the risk:** don’t get caught out – stay in control.

Feeling tired and not looking or feeling your best
Alcohol might help you nod off, but even just a few drinks can affect the quality of your sleep. If you regularly drink more than the government’s daily unit guidelines you can wake up the next day feeling like you haven’t had any rest at all.

**Reduce the risk:** don’t accept drinks from strangers and don’t leave your drink unattended. Never drink from a drink that has been left unattended and if it looks or tastes suspect, don’t drink it.

Mixing alcohol and other drugs
Mixing alcohol with other drugs can be very unpredictable and dangerous. Certain medications, such as antidepressants, should not be mixed with alcohol either.

Drink spiking
The addition of extra alcohol, or even drugs, to drinks could result in you ending up in a risky and unsafe situation.
If you are a student at the University and you live outside of Nottingham, you can still access the Last Orders clinic at The University of Nottingham Health Service.

The University Counselling Service offers free, confidential support to students and staff. You can contact them to make an appointment:
t: 0115 951 3695
e: counselling.service@nottingham.ac.uk

Local services

Last Orders is a service for people who want to reduce the amount of alcohol they drink. It is the first point of contact for all alcohol treatment in Nottingham. They can assess you and refer you to appropriate services.

You can:
• ask your GP to refer you
• refer yourself by calling 0115 970 9590
• email lastorders@frameworkha.org

• access the Last Orders clinic at The University of Nottingham Health Service (you do not have to be a registered patient): 0115 846 8888
• visit the Last Orders service in the 8 till 8 Health Care NEMS building on Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham. (Available 10am-5pm Monday to Friday, 11am-4pm Saturday, with an on-call service 11am-4pm Sunday and bank holidays.)
• find out more from www.last-orders.org

Getting help

Recognising that you have a problem with alcohol is the first and hardest step. Below are details of services which can help.

Services for students who live outside of Nottingham

Apas is an independent provider of a variety of services designed to reduce the harm alcohol and gambling cause to individuals, families and the communities they live in. They are based in Nottingham and Derby but provide support throughout Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and the neighbouring counties.
t: 0115 941 4747
w: www.apas.org.uk

ADS Derby is a service free to anyone 18 or over who lives in the city of Derby and has problems with alcohol misuse.
t: 0161 831 2400
Useful websites and telephone numbers

Drinkaware aims to change the UK’s drinking habits for the better. They promote responsible drinking and find innovative ways to challenge the national drinking culture to help reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol-related harm. From their website, you can download the MyDrinkaware app to your mobile. The app lets you tap in drinks wherever you go and will show you their unit count. You can also keep an eye on the calories you are consuming.

w: www.drinkaware.co.uk

The NHS provides information on alcohol and health along with unit and calorie calculators, tips on cutting down and other people’s experiences of alcohol problems.

w: www.nhs.uk/livewell/alcohol

Alcohol Concern is a national charity which campaigns for effective policy and improved services for those affected by alcohol. If you are concerned about your own or someone else’s drinking call Drinkline:

t: 0800 917 8282
w: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous provides support for people trying to overcome alcoholism.

t: 0845 769 7555
w: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Nightline is a student-run confidential listening and information service. Nightliners are on duty every night from 7pm-8am during term-time to listen to any problem you may have.

t: 0115 951 4985 (free from any internal line in the University on 14985)

Samaritans is a confidential emotional support service.

t: 0845 790 9090

Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre provides a range of specialist services for women and girls who have been raped or who have experienced another form of sexual violence.

t: 0115 941 0440

e: support@topazcentre.org.uk

The Topaz Centre is Nottinghamshire’s Sexual Assault Referral Centre. It provides multi-agency support to survivors of rape and sexual assault.

t: 0845 600 1588

If you are on campus call security on 0115 951 8888. Off Campus Call 111 if you need advice or medical treatment quickly, and cannot wait for an appointment to see your doctor or if you need emergency medical treatment call 999.

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