

Healthy Living

for Everyday Life

Alcohol Awareness

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Health Promotion Officer



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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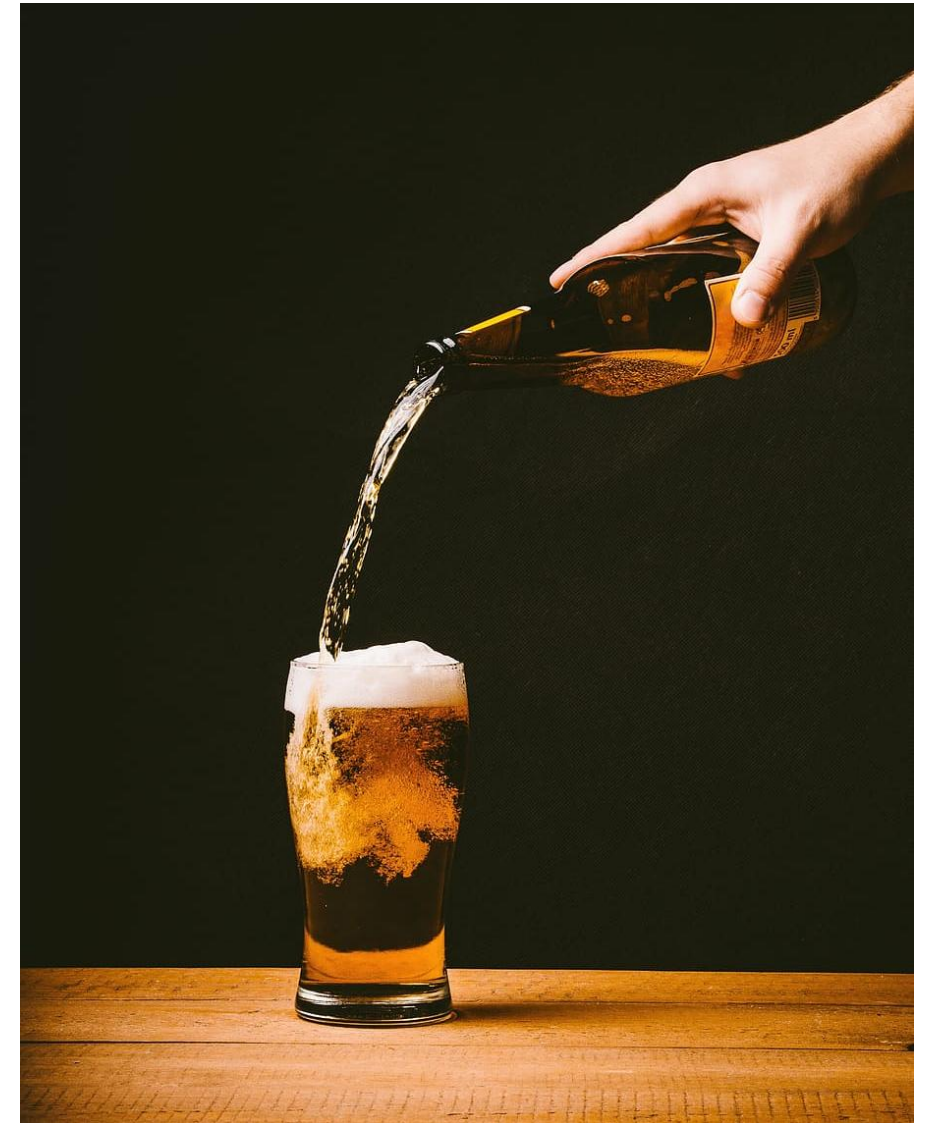


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Introduction Ice Breaker!

- House keeping
- What is your name?
- Can you name one brand of alcohol?



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Workshop Objectives



By the end of this workshop you will be able to:

- Know your risk factors of drinking alcohol
- Understand the 'Stages of Behaviour Change'
- Know your alcohol limits and how to reduce it
- Find support services

Why talk about alcohol?

Alcohol is legal but can have serious health and social consequences.

Body

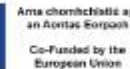
- Sleep
- Mood
- Health
- Addiction

Relationships

- Arguments
- Loss in trust or connections
- Feeling alone

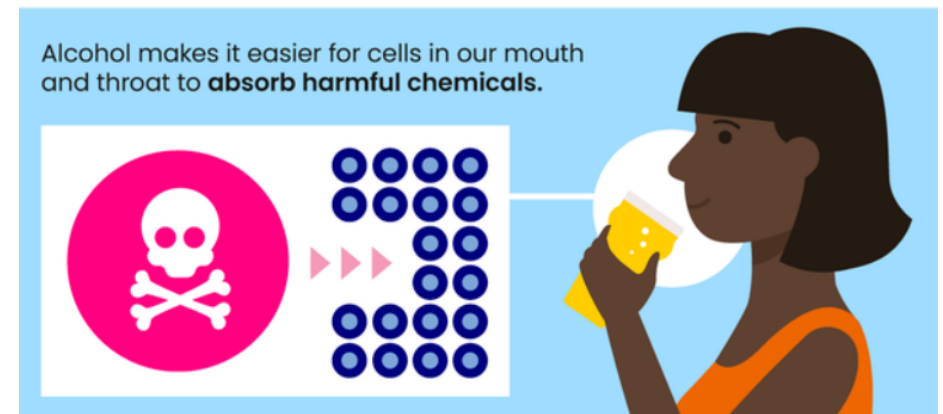
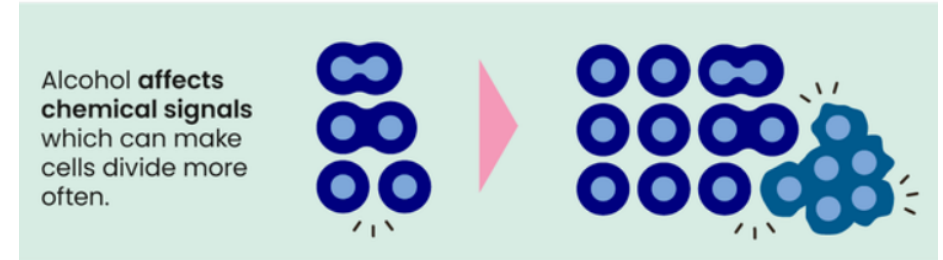
Responsibilities

- Missing work
- Caring for self and others
- Money problems



Alcohol Class 1 Carcinogen- what does this mean?

- It groups substances based on their potential to cause cancer.
- Class 1 = strong proof it causes cancer
- It doesn't matter what form of alcohol you drink!
- To lower your risk, reduce the amount you drink.
- Smoking is also classified as class 1



Alcohol and Cancer

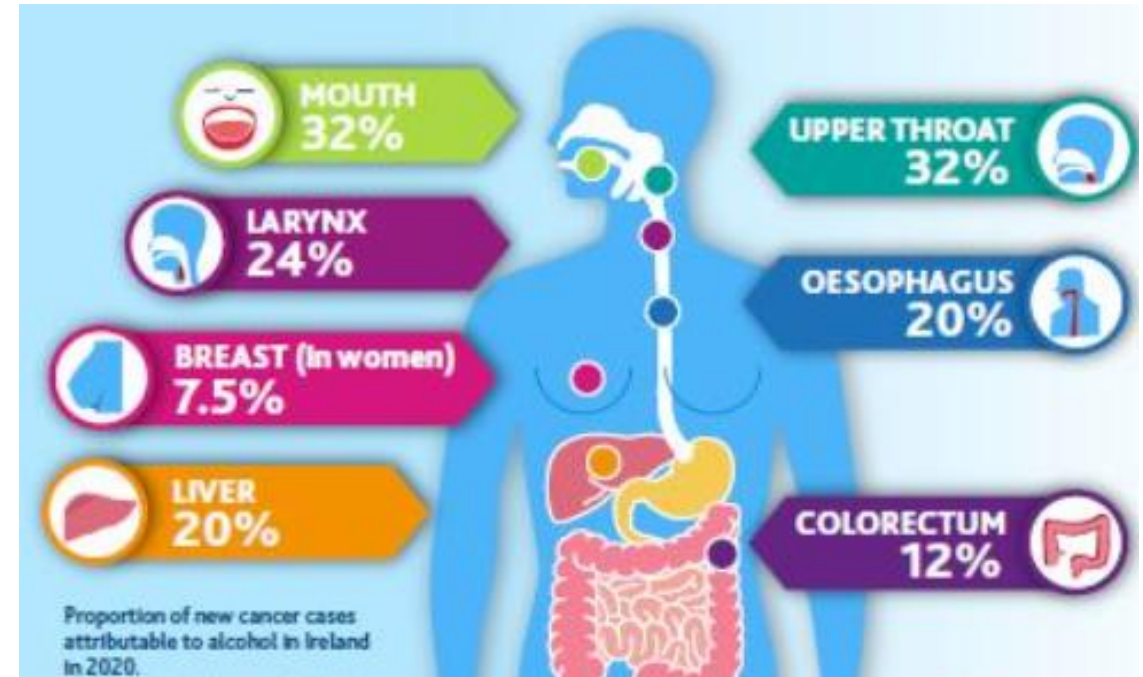
Impact in Ireland

Alcohol has caused:

- 1,000 cases/year of alcohol-related cancers.
- 260 breast cancers and 400 bowel cancers annually

How Alcohol Causes Cancer

- Damages DNA.
- Prevents cell repair.
- Increases hormones (oestrogen), raising breast cancer risk.
- Reduces nutrient absorption.
- Increases the effect of tobacco



What is Behavioural Change?

- **Changing how we act**, especially when we want to build a healthy habit or stop doing something that's not good for us.
- It's how people change habits like drinking alcohol.



Stages of Change



Case study



Lets Meet Sarah

We'll follow Sarah, a woman in her 40s who drinks wine every night.

- Let's see how she moves through the 5 stages of change.

Click on the speaker:



Precontemplation – “I’m fine the way I am”

- Sarah thinks there is nothing wrong.
- Hear how she is doing:



Be alcohol aware



Alcohol is a Group 1 carcinogen

Strong evidence it causes cancer, including breast, liver, and bowel cancers



Even small amounts can increase cancer risk

Regular low-level drinking still raises your risk, especially for breast cancer



Alcohol affects your brain and decision-making

It slows down your central nervous system, which can lead to poor judgment, risky behavior, and impaired coordination



Coffee or a cold shower does not help you sober up quickly

Only time helps your body process alcohol, Coffee might make you feel more alert, but it doesn't reduce blood alcohol levels



Red wine is not healthy

While it contains some antioxidants, the risks of alcohol — especially cancer — outweigh any small benefit. You can get antioxidants from grapes without the ethanol

How Much is Too Much?

Standard drinks



½ pint = 1 standard drink



1 spirit - pub single measure = 1 standard drink



1 small glass of wine (100ml) = 1 standard drink



1 pint = 2 standard drinks



Bottle of wine (750ml) = 7 standard drinks

Low-risk drinking limits:

- Women: up to 11 standard drinks/week
- Men: up to 17 standard drinks/week

[drinks-calculator](#)

Understanding low – risk drinking limits

1 HOUR
TO PROCESS
1 UNIT



until there's no alcohol left in your bloodstream.



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Binge Drinking: Know the Risk

What Is Binge Drinking?

- Consuming 6+ standard drinks in one sitting (men), or 4+ drinks (women).
- Often occurs during social events, weekends, or celebrations.



Binge drinking effects

Short-Term:

- Impairs judgment, memory and balance
- Accidents & injuries Alcohol poisoning
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Aggression & violence

Long-Term:

- Reliant on alcohol
- Cognitive decline
- Liver damage
- Heart disease
- Mental health issues
- Increased cancer risk (especially breast, liver, bowel)

Contemplation – “Maybe I should do more”

- Sarah starts to wonder: 'Maybe I drink too much?'
- Hear how she is doing:



Calories in alcohol



Activity: Pros and cons to drinking

Pros

Helps some people relax or unwind

Social bonding in certain settings

Temporary escape from stress or emotions

Enjoyment of taste or ritual (e.g., wine with dinner)

Cons

Poor sleep quality

Increased risk of cancer, liver disease, and heart problems

Reduces the effect of medication & antidepressants

Mood swings, anxiety, or depression

Memory and concentration issues

Risk of dependence or addiction

Financial cost

Impact on relationships or responsibilities

Activity: Pros and cons to cutting down

Pros

- Better sleep and energy
- Improved mood and mental health
- Lower risk of cancer and other diseases
- Clearer thinking and memory
- More control over choices and habits
- Saves money
- Positive impact on relationships

Cons

- Social pressure or feeling left out
- Breaking old habits can be hard
- Withdrawal symptoms (for heavy drinkers)
- Finding new ways to relax or cope



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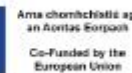
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Preparation- “What can I do instead?”

- Sarah decides to make a change.
- Hear how she is doing:



Preparation Phase – Practical Tips



Understand

Understand Your Triggers:

- Notice when and why you drink (e.g., stress, boredom, social events).

Challenge

Challenge Social Norms:

- It's okay to say no. Practice responses like 'I'm taking a break from alcohol.'

Expect

Expect Setbacks:

- Life events can make change harder. Plan ahead for tough times.

Motivation

Use a Motivation Scale:

- Ask yourself: 'On a scale of 1–10, how motivated am I to cut down?'

Confidence

Use a Confidence Scale:

- Ask: 'How confident am I that I can make this change?'

Make

Make a Simple Plan:

- Choose one small step (e.g., skip one drink, talk to a friend, call a support line).

Finding Your Motivation

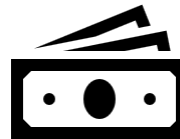
- What matters to you? 💬 What do you want more of in life?



Better health
(more energy,
sleep, fewer
headaches)



More time and
connection with
family



Saving money

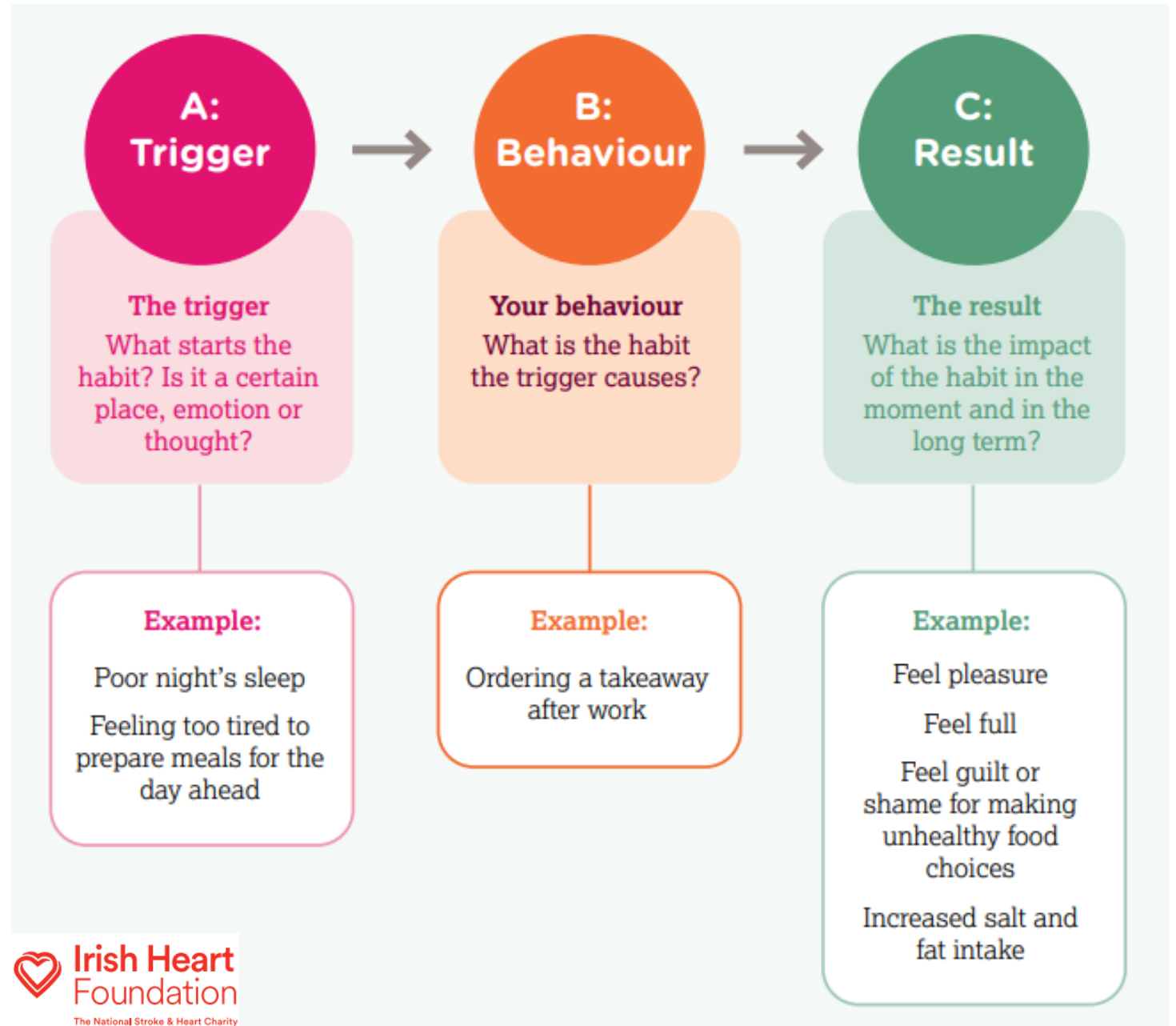


Feeling proud
and in control



Self-respect
and confidence

Map Your Triggers



Be prepared



Drink low-alcohol alternatives.



Suggest alcohol-free activities with friends



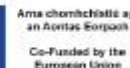
Learn some stress-management techniques, like controlled breathing or mindfulness



Change your route to avoid pubs or off-licenses.



Avoid having alcohol in the house.



Action- “I’m doing it!”

- Sarah has managed to reduce her drinking
- Hear how she is doing:



Barriers to reducing alcohol

Cravings or habits

- Distract yourself with a walk, call a friend, or drink water instead

Social pressure

- Practice saying 'No thanks' or bring your own non-alcoholic drink.

Stress or emotions

- Deep breathing, journaling, or talking to someone.

Feeling alone

- Try reach out to support services or join a group in the community.

Calling a Support Service – What to Expect

When you call:

- A friendly person will listen
- You can talk about your drinking
- They may ask:
 - How often do you drink?
 - How much do you drink?
 - Do you want to cut down?
- You don't have to give your name
- They will offer support or suggest next steps



Relapse- “I slipped up. I’ll start again”

- Sarah has slipped up
- Hear how she is doing:



Relapse

Relapse is a step in the journey – not the end!

● Common feelings:

- Shame, guilt, frustration – these are normal.

How to get back on track



Talk to someone you trust



Call a support service – they won't judge



Reflect: What triggered the relapse?



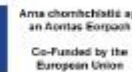
Make a new plan – even small steps help



Celebrate progress, not perfection

Maintenance “I feel great. I need to keep going”

- Sarah has managed to stay on top of reducing her drinking
- Hear how she is doing:



Maintaining your progress

Reflect
regularly

Celebrate
milestones

Visualise
setbacks

Stick to a
schedule

Make it
automatic

Track
progress

Surround
yourself

Avoid
triggers

Seek help

Be flexible

Learn from
slip-ups

Keep
growing

Support Services

Wexford Community Based Drugs Initiative

☎ 053 912 3262

☎ 087 935 1765

🌐 www.fdys.ie

✉ johnpaul.oneill@fdys.ie

✉ niamh.clancy@fdys

County Wexford Substance Misuse Service

📍 St John's Hospital, Enniscorthy

☎ 053 925 9825

🌐 www.hse.ie

✉ annemarie.walsh@mail.hse.ie

Aiséirí Wexford

📍 Roxborough, Wexford

☎ 053 914 1818

🌐 www.aiseiri.ie

✉ info@aiseiri.ie

🕒 Opening times available on website

Alcoholics Anonymous – Wexford

☎ 01 842 0700

🌐 www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

✉ gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Cornmarket Project Info

☐ Cornmarket Project

📍 Block A, Old County Hall, Spawell Road, Wexford

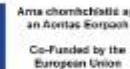
☎ 053 915 5817

✉ cmpadmin@cornmarketproject.com

Final Reflection

- What's one thing you learned today?
- What is one thing you can change from today?

Remember: Change is a journey, not a race.



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Healthy living for everyday life

Trusted information for better health

Enniscorthy library

Every Tuesday morning

10:30 am – 12 pm

14 October 2025	Alcohol awareness Reducing the health risk (Irish Heart Foundation)
21 October 2025	Movement matters Practical tips for everyday exercise (Sports Active Wexford)
04 November 2025	Understanding smoking and vaping Tools and supports to quit (HSE Health Promotion)
11 November 2025	Healthy eating Eat well, live well (HSE Dietician)
18 November 2025	Cancer risk reduction Reduce risk and spot signs (HSE Health Promotion)
*26 November 2025	Five ways to wellbeing Introduction to mental wellbeing (Mental Health Ireland)

(*Wednesday 26th- change to session)

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