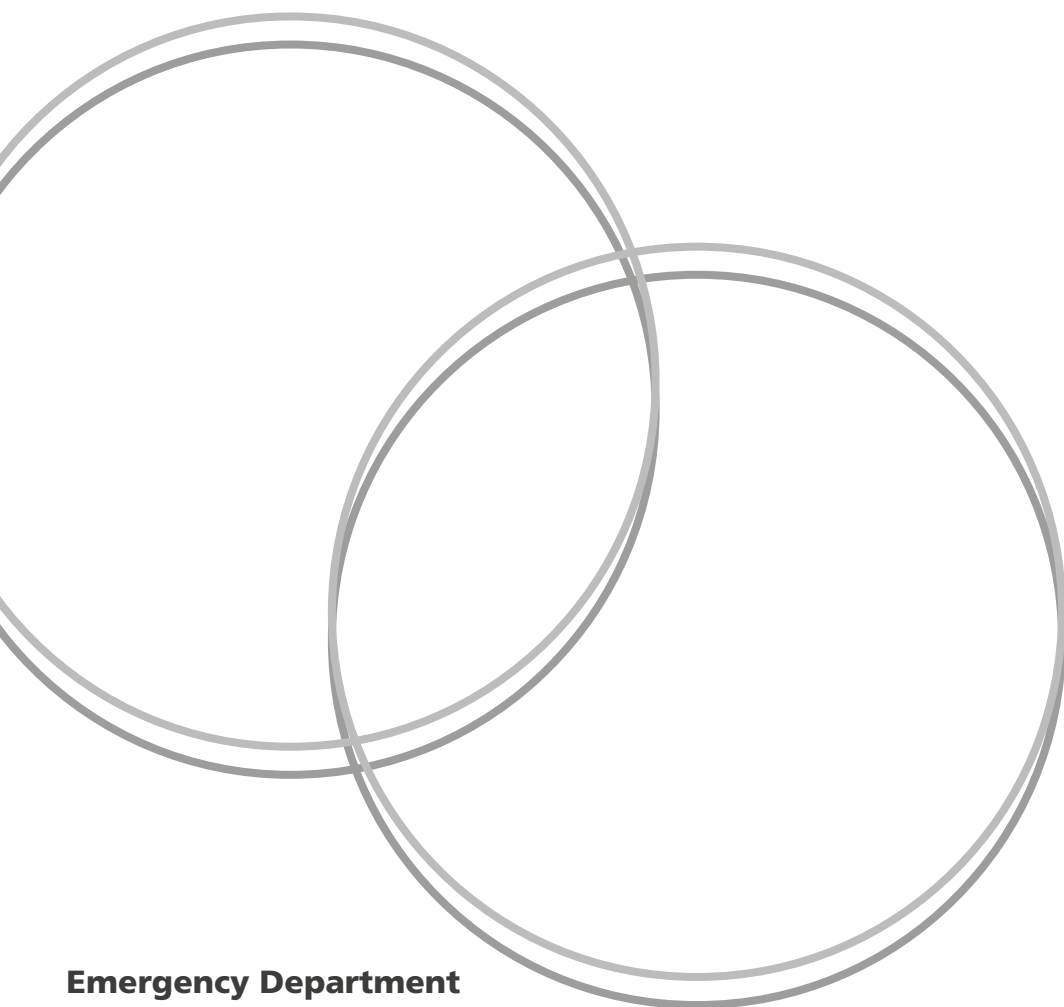


# Alcohol and Drugs

**Information for patients**



**Emergency Department**

## How Does Alcohol Affect You?

- Alcohol affects your body's responses, slowing down your brain and putting you at higher risk of accidents. It also slows down your reactions and disrupts coordination & balance, impairs concentration, vision & hearing.
- Alcohol affects your judgement & reasoning.
- Alcohol makes you feel warm, but the reality is very different; the body sends blood to vessels close to the skin, taking it away from major organs. You may feel hot, but your core temperature has dropped. You should dress appropriately for cold weather & know how you will be getting home, or you may put yourself at risk of hypothermia
- Alcohol makes the kidneys work faster so you will pass urine more frequently. It also causes the body to sweat more. Increase in passing urine + sweating = dehydration.

**It is important you drink more water and stay hydrated.**

## Know your units

The Chief Medical Officers guidelines recommend you should not regularly drink over 14 units of alcohol a week.

That's 6 pints of regular beer a week!

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/calculating-alcohol-units/)

[www.drinkcoach.org.uk/download-drinkcoach-app](http://www.drinkcoach.org.uk/download-drinkcoach-app)

## Responsible Drinking:

- Don't drink on an empty stomach.
- Drink soft drinks in between alcoholic drinks.
- Don't feel pressured into drinking by other people.  
It's ok to say no.
- Avoid buying drinks in rounds.
- Avoid drinking and taking drugs.
- Stick to one type of drink.
- On nights out look out for each other, stick together.  
Let your friends know when you get home safely.
- Do not drink and drive, operate machinery or swim.
- The effects of alcohol can still affect your judgement and performance the next day.

## Effects of Drugs

- Drugs are chemical substances and abusing them can lead to a variety of health problems, both physically and mentally.
- Most people do not take drugs with the intention of becoming addicted, but unfortunately, the short-term effects of drugs can provide temporary relief.
- This means they may continue to abuse drugs before developing an addiction that becomes almost impossible to beat.
- There are both short-term and long-term effects of drugs, which vary depending on the actual drug taken and the way in which it is abused.

## Short term effect of drugs and categories

### Stimulants

Such as ecstasy, cocaine, speed, and mephedrone tend to make the user feel energetic, alert, and full of confidence. They can also lead to more negative side effects such as anxiety and panic attacks.

### Hallucinogens

These include drugs such as LSD and magic mushrooms, and these give users a distorted perception of the world around them. They can lead to disturbing thoughts. Hallucinations and delusions can frighten the user and make them act in a bizarre manner. Individuals that react badly to hallucinogens have been known to put themselves and others in danger, while under the effects of the drug.

## **Depressants**

These include heroin, cannabis and alcohol, these substances make the user feel relaxed and happy. They can cause respiratory failure, and those who take too much are at risk of overdose and even death.

## **Dissociatives**

These include Ketamine and Phencyclidine (PCP). Dissociative drugs can lead to distortion of sights, colours, sounds, self and ones' environment. It is often "snorted" up the nose, injected, mixed into drinks, or smoked with Marijuana or tobacco. They can cause problems with attention, learning and memory leading to dreamlike states, hallucinations, drowsiness, confusion, raised blood pressure and dangerously slow breathing. Long-term usage can lead to ulcers, kidney problems, stomach pain, depression, and memory loss.

## **Reasons for cutting back on Cannabis and Drugs**

- Becoming dependent and feeling a need to have the substance all the time
- Cost, in terms of money spent regularly
- Lack of energy and motivation
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty maintaining relationships
- Can cause depression and paranoia

# Support Services

## **Turning Point:**

Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service in Oxfordshire.

**01865 261 690**

Hubs in Banbury: **01295 225 544**

Didcot: **01235 514 360**

Witney: **01993 849 408**

Email: [Oxfordshire@turning-point.co.uk](mailto:Oxfordshire@turning-point.co.uk)

Website: [www.turning-point.co.uk/services/oxfordshire](http://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/oxfordshire)

## **Alcoholics Anonymous:**

**0800 917 7650**

Email: [help@aamail.org](mailto:help@aamail.org)

Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

## **Samaritans:**

Free phone **116 123**

Open 24 hours a day 365 days a week to talk.

## **NHS Oxfordshire Talking Therapies:**

Offers a free range of talking therapies. Self-referrals made via the online referral form or phone line.

**01865 901 222**

Website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/oxon-talking-therapies/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/oxon-talking-therapies/)

## **Oxfordshire Mind:**

**01865 247 788**

Website: [www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/help/](http://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/help/)

### **Al-Anon Family Group:**

Support for people affected by someone else's drinking.

**0207 403 0880**

Website: [www.al-anon.org.uk](http://www.al-anon.org.uk)

### **Oxfordshire Here4YOUth service**

Offers advice, support and guidance to children and young people about drug and alcohol use.

**01865 590 825**

Website: [cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/young-people/oxfordshire-here4youth/](http://cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/young-people/oxfordshire-here4youth/)

Email: [here4youthox@cranstoun.org.uk](mailto:here4youthox@cranstoun.org.uk)

### **Drink Aware:**

Useful information and tips. You can also speak to their Drink chat advisor.

Website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

### **Alcohol Change:**

Website: [www.alcoholchange.org.uk](http://www.alcoholchange.org.uk)

## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Community Safety Practitioner and Alcohol Care Team

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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