



**nurse
anna**

Alcohol and ABI

Alcohol is a drug that people use for all sorts of reasons. People forget it is a drug because it is legal and easily available. Everyone has stories of people we know who 'got drunk' and did all sorts of things.

People drink alcohol for all sorts of reasons:

- Some people drink because they feel stressed
- Other people need a drink to help them have fun
- Other people drink to help them talk to people
- Other people drink because they like the taste
- More often than not, it is a combination of all of these things.

Drinking alcohol in moderation is usually OK providing you are at, or over, the legal age of 18, but there are some special considerations for people who have an ABI.

Alcohol affects the brain. It particular affects balance so getting very drunk can make you less steady on your feet. If you have problems with ataxia, you are more likely to fall over and hurt yourself.

Alcohol damages neurons too so you don't want to drink to the point where you kill lots of healthy brain cells off because you will need them as you learn to adjust to your head injury.

Alcohol can make you very dehydrated and thirsty so if you have damaged your pituitary gland or the hypothalamus you should really think twice before drinking alcohol. It might make you very poorly.

Alcohol and medication

Please remember that alcohol can interact with medication you have been taking. If you are taking antiepileptic medication and drink alcohol you might have nasty side effects.

Speak to your doctor about drinking. You may not have to keep off alcohol all of the time but you just need to be careful when you do, and not drink too much.





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Facts about drinking

Alcohol is measured in units. Men should have no more than 2-3 units a day with a maximum of 21 units a week. Women should have no more than 1-2 units a day with a maximum of 14 units a week. There are two units in a pint of beer and one unit in a very small glass of wine. It is very easy to drink all your units with a few drinks! You shouldn't drink alcohol everyday either because that can be bad for you. A drink two or three times a week is okay though.

Binge drinking is a big problem and can damage your health. Binge drinking means having lots of alcohol in a short space of time. Having a binge drink of five pints in the space of a few hours is the same as having 18 units. It takes your body one hour to get rid of each unit you put in your body.

There is more information about alcohol at:
www.teenagehealthfreak.co.uk



aboutbraininjury.org.uk