

# Alcohol Advice

## Patient Information

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## Introduction

If you have been in hospital because of problems relating to alcohol, stopping drinking alcohol seems like a sensible idea. If you have had an alcohol detox there will no longer be physical signs of withdrawal from alcohol the only withdrawal will be a psychological craving.

This leaflet is designed to give you tips and ideas to help you stay off alcohol and also, to give you some information about alcohol related issues.

## Coping strategies

First of all, when discharged get rid of all your alcohol (unless told otherwise). If people you live with still drink ask them to keep it out of sight. Don't buy alcohol for anyone else – let them buy their own ask everyone around you to stop offering it to you.

Stay away from environments associated with alcohol. That includes the local pub, off licence and your drinking friends flat. Being around alcohol may put you at risk of relapse. Even if this does not happen first or second time evidence shows that sooner or later relapse may happen. You may feel confident and proud of your willpower but being around temptation, feelings of discomfort, craving and resentment may become too much.

Structure your day and establish routine. Get up and go to bed at a set time. Consider other ways of spending your day there are plenty of activities that don't involve alcohol. Allow time for your recovery, attend help groups and make contact with others in recovery.

Eat well, eat regular meals, if you feel full you are less likely to want a drink of alcohol. Make sure you have breakfast; this will make cravings less likely, by maintaining your blood sugar level. This will also reduce the risk of irritability due to low blood sugar levels. Try to eat a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. If you crave sugar eat fruit and treat yourself to some chocolate. Don't worry about putting on weight you are probably consuming fewer calories than when you were drinking.

Do some physical activity; walk, swim, bike ride, get down to the gym! Start looking after your body. This will give you energy, relieve aches and pain, improve sleep and help you to relax.

Learn to relax by having a soak in the bath, listen to music, read a book or try a yoga class at your local community centre.

Don't get too tired as you are more likely to feel vulnerable and irritable when you are tired. Allow yourself time to rest and get plenty of sleep.

Don't expect too much of yourself, take one day at a time. Don't rush to make too many plans and try not to be impatient and get everything sorted at once.

Take time to accept your feelings. You may have been used to alcohol to numb your feelings. When you were drinking, your feelings were not normal. They were affected by the amount of alcohol you were drinking, and by the tension and anxiety you felt. Now that you have stopped drinking you may feel up one minute and down the next. As time goes by these mood swings will eventually level out. Don't use anger, guilt or depression as an excuse to drink; drink will only make these feelings even worse, as you will also feel you have let yourself down.

Protect your recovery, be selfish and don't get involved with anybody else's problems. Also stay away from people who undermine your recovery (possibly your drinking friends). The longer you can go without a drink the stronger you will get, and your chances of avoiding a relapse are better. Remember you are in charge of your life and have sole responsibility as to whether you pick up a drink!

Don't expect too much from other people, like recovery trust will take time to develop. Also you cannot expect others to change their thinking or lifestyle just because you have.

On Discharge from hospital you may have been prescribed Vitamin B and Thiamine. These are important vitamins to help in your recovery; they can prevent nerve damage or alcohol dementia so they should be continued until instructed by your GP to stop. You may also be prescribed Acamprosate; this is a drug that has been shown to double abstinence in people receiving treatment for alcohol dependence.

Also on discharge you would have been asked if you wished to be referred to the community alcohol team. If at the time you decided this wasn't for you, but have changed your mind, self-referrals can be made. See contact details overleaf.

### **Contact details further help and advice can be sought from:**

Hospital Based Alcohol Specialist Nurse Team (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm)  
**01942 822289**

Wigan & Leigh Drug and Alcohol Services **01942 487578**

Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service **01942 487578**

Brick Project (for homeless or rough sleepers) **01942 236953**

Alcoholics Anonymous **0845 769 7555**

DRINKLINE 0800 917 8282 (Monday to Friday 9am to 11pm)

AI – Anon Family Groups (10am to 10pm) **0207 403 0888**

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
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Wigan Lane  
Wigan WN1 2NN

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: [https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient\\_information/leaflets/](https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient_information/leaflets/)

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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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