

A guide to brief interventions for alcohol

Throughout the brief intervention, remember to maintain rapport and empathy.

1

Ask

'We ask everyone about alcohol use because it can affect your health. Would it be ok to ask you a few questions about your alcohol use today?'

2

Assess using the AUDIT-C questions

- How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?
- How many standard drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day?
- How often do you have 6 or more standard drinks on a single occasion? (see patient record management software for response options and scoring)

3

Advise.

If drinking at risky levels

'Drinking at these levels carries greater risk of X ... Do you think that applies to you at all?'

If not drinking at risky levels

'The less you drink, the lower your risk of alcohol related harm'

4

Assist

First, listen for readiness to change.

'What are your feelings about your drinking?' 'What would be helpful to you just now?'

Then, choose a suitable approach. Use one or more of the following:

Information and advice

'Would you like more information?'

Coping strategies

'How can you prepare to avoid problems and difficult situations?'

Enhance motivation

'What are some of the things you like about drinking? What are some of the things you like less?'

Build confidence

'How confident do you feel?'
'Tell me about other times you've made difficult changes like this'

Menu of options

'What would you like to change about your drinking?' Have you got any ideas for how you might go about making these changes?'

5

Arrange

- Follow up appointment
- Contact DACAS on 1800 812 804 for more severe problems or extra advice

Exit strategy – you or the patient can choose not to continue at any point.

Close the conversation:

'It's fine if you don't want to discuss this now. I'll leave this leaflet with you.'

If at anytime you do want to talk about alcohol use and your health, I'm here.'

What is a standard drink?



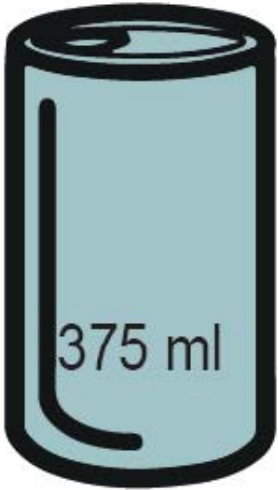
Full strength
beer



Spirits



Port or
fortified wine



Mid strength
beer



Wine

REACH - Reducing Alcohol -Related Harm in General Practice - <https://www.monash.edu/medicine/spahc/research/reach>

