

Top Tips for Healthier Alcohol Use



1 Myths about alcohol & COVID-19



MYTH Consuming alcohol destroys the virus that causes COVID.

FACT Consuming alcohol will not destroy the virus, and its consumption is likely to increase the health risks if a person becomes infected with the virus as it can weaken your immune system. Alcohol (at a concentration of at least 60% by volume) works as a disinfectant on your skin, but it has no such effect within your system when ingested.

MYTH Drinking strong alcohol kills the virus in the inhaled air.

FACT Consumption of alcohol will not kill the virus in the inhaled air; it will not disinfect your mouth and throat; and it will not give you any kind of protection against COVID-19.

MYTH Alcohol (beer, wine, distilled spirits or herbal alcohol) stimulates immunity and resistance to the virus.

FACT Alcohol has a deleterious effect on your immune system and will not stimulate immunity and virus resistance



2 Don't try to use alcohol to manage stress

You might think that alcohol helps you to cope with stress, but it is not in fact a good coping mechanism, as it is known to increase the symptoms of panic and anxiety disorders, depression and other mental disorders, and the risk of family and domestic violence. Instead of drinking alcohol to pass your time at home or to manage your stress, try an indoor workout. Physical activity strengthens the immune system in both the short-term and a long-term.

3 Stick to your routines

It's really easy to fall into patterns of excess drinking of alcohol. Being at home more and not going out may result in you adopting behaviours that you wouldn't normally do. This isn't always good when it comes to alcohol. Try to keep to your normal routines and don't drink when you wouldn't normally.

- Stick to the Government guidelines of no more than 14 units a week.
- Have two clear days when you don't drink at all
- If you do drink, try and keep it to a few units per day over a few days.

4 Get a measure

When we drink at home, we tend to more drink alcohol per drink more than we would in a pub. This is because we guess our measures at home whereas a pub will measure each drink out. When we 'guess' we often add more alcohol and pour a larger volume than what we might have intended to. This means that the glass of wine that we are counting as one unit, could in fact be three or more units.

Take the guesswork out of pouring by getting yourself an alcohol measuring cup – even ordinary food weighing scales will do the trick. You can then be more accurate when you pour wine, beer or other alcoholic drinks, and you'll be able to keep track of how much you're drinking.

5 Add in soft drinks

Add a soft drink in between any alcoholic drinks. This helps to cut down on the number of drinks you are having and also stops you from getting thirsty. When we are thirsty and drinking only alcoholic drinks, we drink faster and more volume of liquid to quench our thirst and therefore, we end up drinking more than we intended.

There are also lots of alcohol-free and lower strength alcohol alternative drinks on supermarket shelves these days. You can find alternative wines, alcohol-free spirit mixers to make cocktails and both alcohol-free and low ABV beers. These are great to help you reduce your alcohol intake



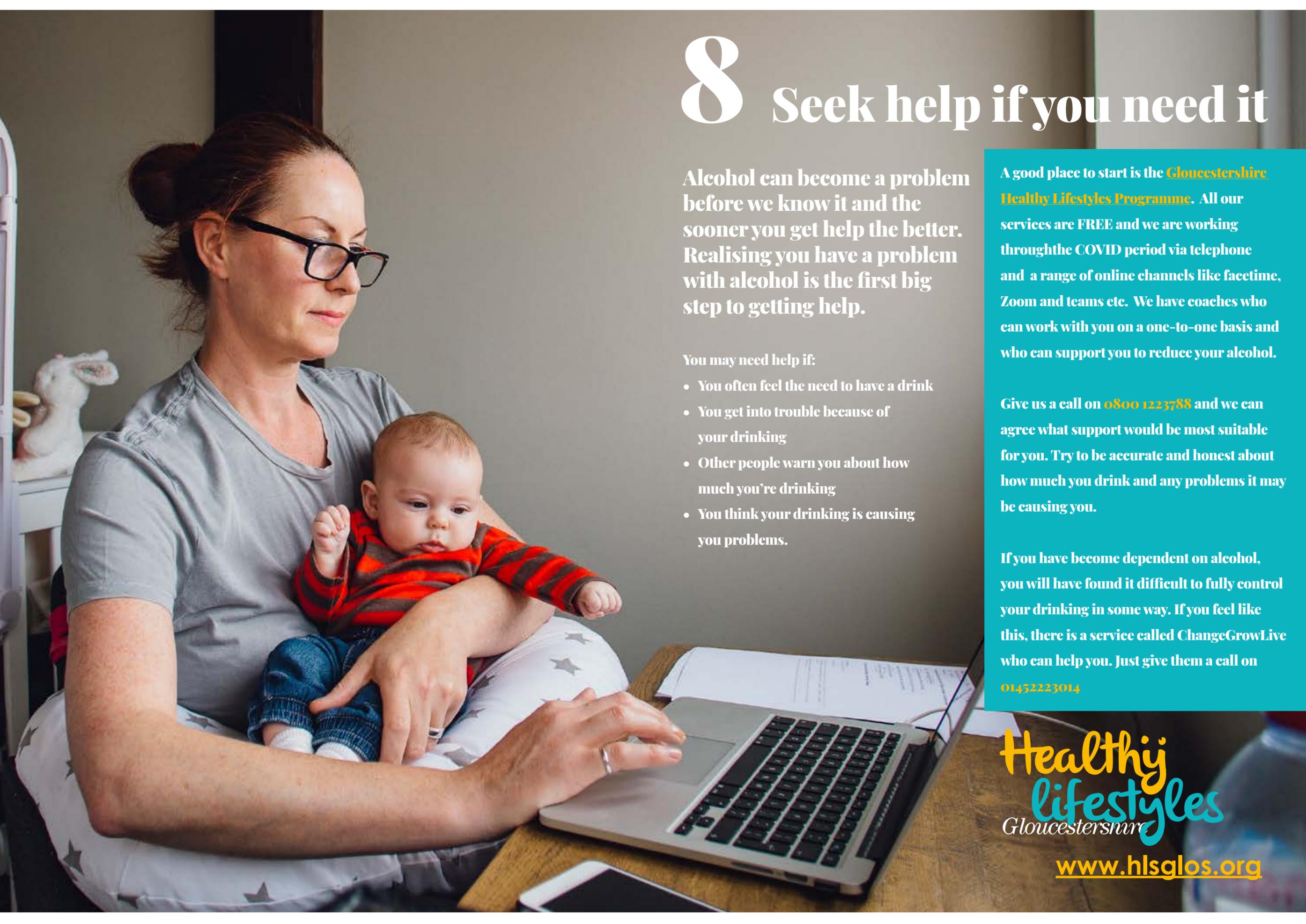
6 Alcohol & Sleep

Drinking can affect your sleep. Although it can help some people fall asleep quickly, it can disrupt your sleep patterns and stop you sleeping deeply. If you are struggling to sleep then alcohol is likely to make this worse. Cutting down on alcohol should help you sleep better and feel more rested when you wake up.

7 Alcohol & Violence

Alcohol is closely associated with violence, including intimate partner violence. Men perpetrate most of the violence against women, which is worsened by their alcohol consumption, while women experiencing violence are likely to increase their alcohol use as a coping mechanism. If you are a victim of violence and are confined with the perpetrator in home isolation, you need a safety plan in case the situation escalates. This includes having a neighbour, friend, relative or shelter to go to in the event that you need to leave the house immediately.





8 Seek help if you need it

Alcohol can become a problem before we know it and the sooner you get help the better. Realising you have a problem with alcohol is the first big step to getting help.

You may need help if:

- You often feel the need to have a drink
- You get into trouble because of your drinking
- Other people warn you about how much you're drinking
- You think your drinking is causing you problems.

A good place to start is the [Gloucestershire Healthy Lifestyles Programme](#). All our services are FREE and we are working through the COVID period via telephone and a range of online channels like facetime, Zoom and teams etc. We have coaches who can work with you on a one-to-one basis and who can support you to reduce your alcohol.

Give us a call on [0800 1223788](tel:08001223788) and we can agree what support would be most suitable for you. Try to be accurate and honest about how much you drink and any problems it may be causing you.

If you have become dependent on alcohol, you will have found it difficult to fully control your drinking in some way. If you feel like this, there is a service called ChangeGrowLive who can help you. Just give them a call on [01452223014](tel:01452223014)

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