

# Alcohol and driving.

The best advice? Do not drink and drive, however small you think the amount of alcohol is in your drink.

Yet whilst less people may drink and drive on a night out, many people still get into their cars the morning after without realising they may still be affected by alcohol.



## Driving the morning after.

"The amount of alcohol in your bloodstream depends on three things," says Dr Paul Wallace, Drinkaware's Chief Medical Adviser:

- The amount of alcohol you take in
- Over what period of time
- The speed at which your body gets rid of it

Whether it's okay to drive the next morning depends on how much you've drunk and if you've left enough time for your system to get rid of the alcohol.

## How long does it take a unit of alcohol to leave the body?

On average, it takes about one hour for your body to break down one unit of alcohol. However, this can vary, depending on:

- Your weight
- Whether you're male or female
- Your age
- How quickly or slowly your body turns food into energy (your metabolism)
- How much food you have eaten
- The type and strength of the alcohol
- Whether you're taking medication and, if so, what type
- It can also take longer if your liver isn't working normally

So if you had nine units of alcohol on a night out and stopped drinking at 2am, if you get up in the morning and drive at 8am there may be several units of alcohol still in your body, which could place you over the drink drive limit.

## How many units of alcohol in a drink? Roughly...

- 2.1 units in a standard glass (175ml) of average-strength wine (12%)
- 3 units in a large glass (250ml) of average-strength wine (12%)
- 2 units in a pint of low-strength lager, beer or cider (3.6%)

- 3 units in a pint of higher-strength lager, beer or cider (5.2%)
- 1 unit in a single measure of spirits (25ml).

## What's the legal limit?

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the legal alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 80 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of blood in your body
- 35 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of breath
- 107 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of urine

In Scotland, the legal alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 50 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of blood in your body
- 22 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of breath
- 67 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of urine

## How to ensure you don't drink and drive.

- If you go out with a group of friends, arrange for one of the group to be the designated driver. You can take this in turns on your nights out
- Use public transport if you can
- If you have to drive – stick to non-alcoholic drinks



Lots of useful information and resources can be found at

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