

More information

NHS: www.nhs.uk/conditions

University Hospitals Dorset: www.uhd.nhs.uk

With You: www.wearewithyou.org.uk/local-hubs/bournemouth-christchurch-and-poole

REACH Dorset: www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/dorset

Inclusion Recovery Hampshire: www.inclusionhants.org.uk

DVLA alcohol and driving information:
www.gov.uk/alcohol-problems-and-driving

Disclaimer

This leaflet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other healthcare professional.

Links to other websites are provided for information only.

University Hospitals Dorset is not responsible for their content.

To read this leaflet in a different language, please visit our website:
www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 019 8499 or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

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w: www.uhd.nhs.uk  @UHDTrust  @uhd_nhs

Some of our hospital services are moving.
Visit www.uhd.nhs.uk/future to find out more.

Alcohol and driving

Patient information

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If your drinking could make your driving unsafe, you must stop driving and tell the DVLA.

This includes if you:

- are dependent on alcohol
- often drink enough alcohol to harm your health
- have had seizures (fits) caused by alcohol
- have a health problem caused by alcohol that could affect your driving

If any of these apply to you, you must stop driving straight away.

If you do not tell the DVLA, you could be breaking the law. It could also affect your driving licence and your motor insurance.

Even if you have:

- been in hospital
- had treatment or a detox
- stopped drinking
- cut down how much you drink

you may still not be allowed to drive. You must follow DVLA advice before driving again.

Your GP or hospital doctor may have to share medical information with the DVLA if they think it is needed to keep you and other people safe.

What does the DVLA mean by alcohol problems?

The DVLA uses two main terms:

Harmful alcohol use

This means you drink alcohol in a way that causes harm.

How do I tell the DVLA?

You must fill in a medical form called DR1.

You can download it from the GOV.UK website and send it to the DVLA.

Online

www.gov.uk/alcohol-problems-and-driving

By post

Drivers Medical Group

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1DF

Telephone: **0300 790 6806**

Monday to Friday: 8am to 5:30pm, Saturday: 8am to 1pm

Where can I get help?

If you live in Bournemouth, Christchurch or Poole, contact **With You**.

Telephone: **01202 558855**

If you live elsewhere in Dorset, contact **REACH**.

Telephone: **0800 043 4656**

If you live in Hampshire, contact **Inclusion**.

Telephone: **0300 124 0103**

You can also speak to your GP. They can help you with your alcohol use and your general health.

What happens if I keep driving?

If you keep driving when you have been told not to, your doctor or healthcare professional may need to tell the DVLA.

The DVLA may:

- take away your driving licence
- decide you are not fit to drive

You could also face legal action if you drive when it is not safe.

Why is it dangerous to drive after drinking alcohol?

Alcohol affects your brain and body. Even small amounts of alcohol can make it harder to drive safely.

Alcohol can:

- slow your reaction times
- make it harder to judge speed and distance
- reduce your concentration
- affect your vision
- make you feel overconfident and take more risks

This means you are more likely to be involved in a road traffic collision.

Every year, many people are killed or seriously injured in crashes where a driver has been drinking alcohol. These crashes can have a lifelong impact on drivers, passengers, families and other road users.

If you are not sure whether you are safe to drive, do not drive.

How could this affect my life?

If you cannot drive, it may affect your day-to-day life.

For example, you may:

- find it harder to get to work
- lose your job if driving is part of your role
- have difficulty taking children or family members to appointments
- rely on other people or public transport

If you drive when you should not, you could also find it harder or more expensive to get car insurance in the future.

Will my GP know I was in hospital?

Yes.

Your GP will receive a summary of your hospital stay.

This may include:

- why you came into hospital
- the treatment you had
- the advice you were given
- any advice about driving

How long will I be unable to drive?

The DVLA decides this based on your health and recovery. In every case, you must stop driving and tell the DVLA.

Harmful alcohol use

You must not drive.

Your licence is usually taken away or refused for at least:

- 6 months if you drive a car or motorcycle (Group 1)
- 1 year if you drive a bus or lorry (Group 2)

The DVLA will check your health before you can drive again.

Alcohol dependence

You must not drive.

You will usually need to be alcohol-free for at least:

- 12 months if you drive a car or motorcycle
- 3 years if you drive a bus or lorry

The DVLA will check that you have stayed alcohol-free before you can drive again.

Alcohol-related seizures (fits)

You must not drive.

If you have had one alcohol-related seizure, your licence is usually taken away or refused for at least:

- 6 months for car or motorcycle drivers
- 5 years for bus or lorry drivers

The DVLA will check your health before you can drive again.

Alcohol-related health problems

You must not drive and must tell the DVLA.

These can include:

- serious liver disease that affects the brain
- alcohol-related psychosis
- memory or thinking problems caused by alcohol

The DVLA will decide when you are well enough to drive again.

For the latest information, visit the GOV.UK website.

For example, it may:

- damage your health
- change the way you behave
- cause problems for you or other people

You can still choose whether to drink, but your drinking is causing harm.

Alcohol dependence

This means you find it hard to control your drinking.

You may:

- feel a strong need to drink
- find it hard to stop
- need to drink more alcohol to get the same effect
- feel unwell when you stop drinking

You may have withdrawal symptoms such as:

- shaking
- sweating
- feeling anxious
- seizures (fits)

What if I don't think my drinking is a problem?

If you do not agree with your assessment, you can ask for a second medical opinion.

Until a doctor or other healthcare professional says it is safe and legal, you must not drive.