

# Screening for Alcohol Misuse – Quick Reference Guide

## UK UNITS

- In the UK, 1 unit is measured as 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol

This equals:

- One pub measure (25ml) of whisky alcohol by volume: (ABV 40%)
- Half a pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider (3-4% ABV)
- Half a standard (175ml) glass of red wine (ABV 12%)



$$\frac{\text{Strength (ABV)} \times \text{Volume (ml)}}{1000} = \text{No. of units}$$

## WOMEN



2–3 units or 16–24g alcohol per day

## MEN



3–4 units or 24–32g alcohol per day

### Men should:

- drink no more than 21 units of alcohol per week
- drink no more than four units in any one day
- have at least two alcohol-free days a week

### Women should:

- drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week
- drink no more than three units in any one day
- have at least two alcohol-free days a week

## RECOMMENDED SCREENING TOOL

The AUDIT-C alcohol screening tool was developed by the World Health Organization and is recommended by NICE.<sup>1-3</sup>

Questions	Scoring system					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2–4 times per month	2–3 times per week	4+ times per week	
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1–2	3–4	5–6	7–9	10+	
How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

## AUDIT-C SCORING:

- A score of 5 or more is considered positive
- If patients score positive AUDIT-C, it is recommended that they undergo an assessment including the full AUDIT questionnaire. This 10-item questionnaire usually takes between 2-4 minutes to complete.

The full AUDIT questionnaire is free to use and can be found in the *Identification and Brief Advice* topic section on the Alcohol Learning Centre website - [www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk](http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk)

Depending on the AUDIT findings, patients should then be supported with a brief intervention or referred to alcohol services.

1. Babor T F et al. AUDIT: The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. Guidelines for Use in Primary Care. Second Edition. World Health Organization (WHO) 2001  
 2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Clinical Guideline 115. Alcohol-use disorders. Diagnosis, assessment and treatment of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence. February 2011  
 3. Alcohol Learning Centre Website. [www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/alcoholLearning/learning/IBA/Module3\\_v3/D/ALC\\_Session/256/tab\\_642.html](http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/alcoholLearning/learning/IBA/Module3_v3/D/ALC_Session/256/tab_642.html). Last accessed: March 2015

[www.alcoholreduction.co.uk/ask](http://www.alcoholreduction.co.uk/ask)

Ask About Alcohol 

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A video series for primary care

Provided by Lundbeck Ltd  
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Ask About Alcohol resource

