

Screening for Alcohol Misuse

AUDIT-C QUESTIONNAIRE^{1,2}

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	

Scoring: A total of 5+ indicates increasing or higher risk drinking. An overall total score of 5 or above is AUDIT-C positive and patients should subsequently complete the full AUDIT questionnaire.

FULL AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE^{1,2}

Questions	Scoring system					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of your drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
Have you or somebody else been injured as a result of your drinking?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	
Has a relative or friend, doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you cut down?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	

Scoring: 0 – 7 Lower risk, 8 – 15 Increasing risk, 16 – 19 Higher risk, 20+ Possible dependence

- NICE. Alcohol use disorders; preventing harmful drinking. NICE public health guidance 24; June, 2010.
- Babor TF et al; AUDIT; The alcohol use disorder identification test. Guidelines for use in primary care, 2nd edition, WHO, 2001.

TOTAL Score equals
AUDIT C Score (above) +
Score of remaining questions



Diagnosing Alcohol Dependence

FULL AUDIT SCORES AND SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS^{1,2}

AUDIT score	Risk ¹	Suggested action ²
0-7	Lower risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific action required, but general healthy lifestyle advice.
8-15	Hazardous drinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide brief advice focused on the reduction of hazardous drinking. Suggest recording a drink diary and arrange a follow-up appointment if considered necessary.
16-19	Harmful drinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide brief advice and counselling as well as continued monitoring. Suggest recording a drink diary and arrange a follow-up appointment to discuss further.
20+	Possible dependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scores of 20 and above warrant further diagnostic evaluation for possible alcohol dependence. Undertake further assessment for the level of severity and management options needed, which may include specialist referral in moderate to severe cases and in those with relevant co-morbid conditions.

(Please note, these recommendations are subject to clinical judgement taking into account the patient's medical condition, social circumstances, family history of alcohol problems and perceived honesty in response to the AUDIT questions).

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE³

The WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) outlines that a diagnosis of alcohol dependence can be made when any three or more of the criteria outlined in the table below have been present simultaneously during the past year³

Cognitive/Behavioural	Consequences	Physiological
1. A strong desire or compulsion to take alcohol	3. Neglect of alternative interests due to alcohol use	5. Tolerance
2. Difficulties in controlling the use of alcohol	4. Persisting with alcohol use despite evidence of harmful consequences	6. Withdrawal symptoms

1. NICE. Alcohol use disorders; preventing harmful drinking. NICE public health guidance 24; June, 2010.

2. Babor TF *et al*; AUDIT; The alcohol use disorder identification test. Guidelines for use in primary care, 2nd edition, WHO, 2001.

3. WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), F10 – F19. 2010.