

## Alcohol and CF Related Diabetes Information for Patients

This leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in connection to what is discussed with your doctor.

Diabetes should not stop you going out for a drink with your friends, it is however important that you take some sensible precautions in relation to your diabetes. In particular, you must not forget to take your insulin at the normal times, eat regularly and if you have too much to drink, it is very important that somebody takes you home and monitors your blood sugar.



### What is a unit of alcohol?

Below are the average units of alcohol contained in drinks people tend to consume nowadays.

Pub measure of spirits = 1 unit

1 bottle Alcopop = 1.5 units

1 pint of ordinary strength lager/bitter/cider = 2 units

1 pint strong lager/cider (5%vol) = 3 units

175ml red/white wine(12%vol) = 2 units



### What is a sensible limit?

2 - 3 units per day for women

3 – 4 units per day for men

### What alcohol does to your blood sugar levels

Alcohol has a different effect on different people. It might make your blood sugar go up whilst you are drinking, but the most important thing to remember, is that alcohol can cause delayed hypos. Drinks such as spirits, which have a high alcohol concentration and little carbohydrate (sugar) can drive blood sugar levels down quickly and profoundly, especially when taken on an empty stomach. You should not drink low sugar alcopop type drinks as they have a high alcohol content, so you get drunk quicker and could have a hypo more easily.

### Hypos whilst drinking

Alcohol together with exercise (including dancing or sex) can increase the risk of hypos. Consider this when deciding how much insulin you give. When you have been drinking the feeling alcohol can give you is similar to the feeling of a hypo, so it's easy to get confused. When you have a hypo, your liver helps out by releasing sugar into your bloodstream. However, when you've been drinking alcohol your liver is busy breaking down the alcohol and does not release as much sugar into the bloodstream and therefore hypo's can be more sudden and severe.

#### DO: -

- Tell your friends that you have diabetes and explain what they should do if you have a hypo
- Eat with alcohol – ideally have a main meal before you drink alcohol and a snack afterwards
- Wear ID (Medic alert bracelet) as being drunk can be confused as having a hypo

#### DONT: -

- Mix alcohol with drugs as it is NOT a very good combination
- Don't drink low sugar alcopops
- It is recommended not to have more than 2- 4 units of alcohol per day, but it's best not to drink every day

#### Contact us:

For further advice and support with your diabetes control please contact:

**CF Dietitians** Jo Barrett /Liz Glennon /Toni Osborne /Claire Evans on 0121 424 1796

**CF Diabetes Specialist Nurse** Kirpal Marwa on 0121 424 3577

Monday – Friday: 0800-1600

## Information for Patients

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### **Additional Information Sources:**

For more information on all aspects of living with Cystic Fibrosis you can visit the Cystic Fibrosis Trust web site at: [www.cftrust.org.uk](http://www.cftrust.org.uk).

For local news and events the West Midlands Regional Cystic Fibrosis Unit based at Heartlands Hospital has its own website at: [www.heartlandscf.org.uk](http://www.heartlandscf.org.uk) .

**Please use the space below to write down any questions you may want to ask:**