

Overindulgence

Factsheet



Overindulgence

What is it?

Even something good can become bad if it's excessive. From too much screen time, social media use or working long hours, to consuming too much of the wrong food, drink or substances.

In today's society there's a chaotic, frenzied spiral of new addiction, many people chase money, power, success and a wilder, faster pace of life. Everything we need is available in abundance and produced on mass.

Make good choices about your health and wellbeing and find a happy balance in each area of your life.



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Good food and drink choices

Overindulging, particularly through the festive party season is something we've all done at some time or other. But rich foods, big meals and large volumes of alcohol can result in heartburn, reflux and indigestion.

Eating and drinking to excess can take its toll on the tummy in other ways too. Most visibly, through bloating and stomach distention and often accompanied with pain, wind and constipation.



1

It's a holiday, weekend or occasion

Life has lots of 'special' days and indulging a little on them is okay. But planning ahead and swapping some foods for healthier options will make it easier to stay on track. For example, swap sugar-laden cookies for homemade, using oats, fruit and nuts as the main ingredients.

2

Feeling down or stressed

Whatever's making you feel low, whether it's a hard day at work or relationship problems, it's all too easy to reach for the comfort food, even when you're not hungry. Hike it out with a brisk walk, a large glass of water and something nourishing to eat.

3

I've already eaten unhealthily today

Don't worry about what's already happened, focus on what you can do next. Plan ahead with some healthy snacks and meals, so you're less likely to reach for the nearest convenience food when you're peckish.

4

Office cake culture (if you are in the office)

'Treats' at work fuel obesity and dental problems, and while we all enjoy a slice here and there, the bigger the office, the more birthdays and more cake. Take in tupperware with healthy snacks and talk about your health goals. It'll be easier to be held accountable.

5

Eating out (if you can)

It's no longer tricky to find healthier options when dining out. Look up menus online ahead of time and don't be afraid to ask for substitutions. Avoid the buffet as it's easier to overfill your plate. And try sharing portions or saving some to have later.

6

I'll start being healthier tomorrow

Why not start today? You'll feel the benefits sooner. Start with small steps and take it day by day. Thirst can sometimes be mistaken for hunger, so try starting day one with upping your water intake. Aim for 6-8 glasses a day.

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Is there a connection between sugar and depression?

Sugar occurs naturally in complex carbohydrates like fruits, vegetables, and grains. It's also present in simple, refined foods like pasta, cakes, baked goods, bread, and sweets. The typical diet relies heavily on these easily digestible carbs, and includes far too few complex carbs derived from healthier sources.

Eating too many simple sugars may increase your risk for depression, mood disorders, and several chronic health issues. Read on to learn about the link between sugar and depression. Plus, get tips for managing your sweet tooth.

Studies have shown that a diet rich in whole foods like fruits, vegetables, and fish, can lower your risk for depression. People who ate processed foods like sweetened desserts, fried foods, and processed meats are more likely to be diagnosed with depression than people who largely relied on unprocessed, whole foods.

The average person consumes a huge 5,373 calories during Christmas day. That's twice the recommended daily average for men and three times for women.

The high from sugar is stronger than the high from cocaine.



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Save over 3000 calories with some simple swaps during the festive season

Cut out	Calories	Swap for	Calories	Calories saved
Breakfast				
Fry-up with 2 rashers streaky bacon, 1 sausage, 1 slice fried bread and 1 fried egg	500	Grill-up with 1 grilled rasher of lean bacon, 1 grilled tomato, 1 grilled mushroom and 1 slice of toast	208	292
Lunch				
Three roast potatoes made with sunflower oil	381	Three roast potatoes made with spray olive oil	127	254
Snacks				
Half a tube of Pringles	524	Three tangerines	75	449
Turkey sandwich with butter and mayonnaise, served with crisps	600	Turkey sandwich made with reduced-fat salad cream served with salad	250	350

Top tips for a healthier festive season:

- Enjoy everything in moderation
- Pace yourself
- Match each alcoholic drink with a glass of water
- Make good food choices, opt for vegetable instead of deep-fried food
- Be mindful about how much your body needs for energy and what you don't need to consume

Generally, the recommended daily calorie intake is 2,000 calories a day for women and 2,500 for men.

Exercise

If you've eaten too much and feeling a bit sluggish, get moving, burn off the extra calories and have some fun.

Ideas to get active over the festive period

- Musical chairs
- Dancing
- A family walk or run
- Housework/decorating
- Snow ball fights
- An online festive workout
- Hitting the shops
- Doing star jumps every time an ad break comes on
- Scavenger hunt



Eating one mince pie would need a 21 minute run or 40 minute walk to burn off

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A happy balance with alcohol

It's common to be tempted to turn to the bottle or other substances for entertainment or stress relief. But rather than making us feel better, it could be doing us harm. **When drinking may be a problem:**

Managing responsibilities

When alcohol starts to interrupt your daily living and functioning, or if you find you're not keeping up with major responsibilities at home or work. It might be a sign your drinking is becoming a problem.

Concern from others

If people close to you express concern about how much you're drinking, it could be an early warning sign. Or if your relationships become strained because of your alcohol consumption.

Drinking to cope

In a recent survey, one in four people said they were drinking to cope with stress. People who drink in response to stress tend to drink larger amounts. Another survey showed more than half were drinking more from boredom or loneliness.

Mental health decline

Alcohol can impact mental health and wellbeing. Although initially it creates a feeling of relaxation, it can increase anxiety and disrupt sleep. If you've increased your drinking and your sleep is also disrupted, it might be related.

Aggression and violence

If you find you're becoming angry, aggressive or violent when you drink, it's a problem. It may be best to stop drinking altogether. Alcohol reduces inhibitions and also affects our ability to regulate our emotions.

Regular heavy drinking

If you frequently drink alone, the quantity and frequency may signal a problem. Daily drinking (alone or with others) is associated with dependence and other problems.

Building tolerance

If the usual amount of alcohol doesn't seem to have the same effect or you need to drink more to get the same effect, that's a sign you've increased your tolerance to alcohol. It's an early sign of dependence.



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Drink less, live more - the benefits of drinking less alcohol



Deeper sleep

When you drink too much, you spend less of the night in a deep, restorative sleep. You're also more likely to wake up early and find it hard to drop off again. Drinking less improves your quality and quantity of sleep.



Brighter mood

If you're already feeling sad or anxious, alcohol is likely to make it much worse. Drinking heavily can make you feel in a low mood, due to the neurotransmitters in the brain being disrupted. Drinking less can mean better mental health.



More energy

Alcohol can interfere with your immune system making it harder to fight off illnesses. And with its negative effects on your sleep and mood, it can make you feel tired, sluggish and generally under the weather. Drink less and gain more energy.



Better concentration

Regularly drinking more than 14 units a week can affect your concentration and ability to give 100% to your responsibilities. Drink less and you'll have a clearer head and lower stress levels.



Slimmer waistline

Alcohol contains 7 calories per gram of alcohol. In comparison, pure fat contains 9 calories per gram. If you're wanting to lose weight, cutting down is a quick and easy way.



A happier stomach

Alcohol irritates the stomach and makes it produce more acid than usual, which can in turn cause gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining). Drink less and you could stop unpleasant problems like diarrhoea and indigestion.



More money

Start saving money straight away when you cut down your alcohol consumption. Keep a note of how much you're saving and treat yourself to something special.



Clearer skin

Alcohol dehydrates your skin making it appear dull and grey. Thankfully, skin is quick to react to changes so it could look better after just a couple of days of drinking less.



Better long-term health

Cutting out alcohol lowers your risk of getting cancer. It'll also have a big impact on your liver and should reduce the chances of developing liver disease. The less you drink the less risk there is to your long-term health.

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Less drinking, more thinking

To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level if you drink most weeks:

- Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.
- Spread your drinking over 3 or more days if you regularly drink as much as 14 units a week.
- If you want to cut down, try to have several drink-free days each week.

What does 14 units look like?

- 14 single measures of spirit (25ml, 40% ABV) *Or*
- 6 glasses of wine (175ml, 13% ABV) *Or*
- 6 pints of ordinary strength beer/lager/cider (568ml, 4% ABV)

Reset your relationship with alcohol

Make a plan

Before you start drinking, set a limit on how much you're going to drink.

Set a budget

Only take a fixed amount of money to spend on alcohol.

Let your friends and close ones know

If you let your friends and family know you're cutting down and it's important to you, you could get support from them.

Take it a day at a time

Don't completely cut it out from the start, cut back a little each day. It'll be less of a shock to the system.

Make it a smaller one

Choose smaller sizes. Bottled beer instead of pints, or a small glass of wine instead of large.

Have a lower-strength drink

Cut down by swapping strong beers or wines for ones with a lower strength (ABV in %).

Stay hydrated

Have a glass of water before you have alcohol and alternate alcoholic drinks with water or a soft drink.

Take a break

Have several drink-free days each week.



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Substance abuse

Drug types



Depressants slow down or depress the central nervous system. In small quantities, they can make you feel more relaxed and less inhibited. In larger quantities they may cause unconsciousness and vomiting.



Stimulants speed up the central nervous system and can make a person feel more alert and confident. They increase heart rate and body temperature and cause a reduced appetite. Large quantities can cause anxiety, aggression and paranoia.



Hallucinogens distort a person's perception of reality. People who have taken them may see or hear things that aren't there. Other effects may include, dilated pupils, loss of appetite, sense of psychological euphoria, sweating, paranoia, and nausea.

Key stats



Around 1 in 11 adults aged 16 to 59 have taken a drug in the last year.



70% of substance abusers are in full time employment.



Approximately 85,000 people are convicted of drink driving related offences every year in England and Wales.



An average of 3,551 people are seriously injured in drink driving related accidents in Great Britain every year.

What is dopamine?

It's a type of neurotransmitter, a 'happy' brain chemical. The nervous system uses it to send messages between nerve cells. It influences our mood and how we feel pleasure. Too much or too little dopamine can lead to a range of health issues including Parkinson's disease.

Drug misuse and dopamine

Drugs such as cocaine can cause a rapid increase of dopamine in your brain. Continued use of drugs makes your body less able to produce dopamine naturally which can result in emotional lows when sober.

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Substance abuse

Affecting your life in different ways.

There are many different areas of your life that could be impacted by alcohol, nicotine, drug use, or gambling.

- Legal
- Financial
- Family
- Relationships
- Hobbies and leisure activities
- School or work
- Emotional and mental wellbeing
- Physical health

An addiction to something can be a way of blocking out difficult issues and can be triggered by many things such as stress, emotional or professional pressure and unemployment. The strain of managing an addiction can seriously damage work life and relationships.

Behavioural signs of substance abuse

- Social withdrawal from family and friends
- Changes in appetite
- Sleeping at odd hours
- Decreased focus at work
- Increased irritability
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Paranoia

Physical signs of substance abuse

- Dilated pupils
- Contracted pupils
- Bloodshot eyes
- Insomnia
- Impaired co-ordination
- Hindered speech
- Changes in weight
- Lack of personal grooming



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Less tech, more quality time

Too much time spent on technology can leave you feeling tired, stressed, and mentally exhausted. Stepping away from gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and the TV is a simple solution but can feel difficult to do, particularly while we were in lockdown.

It can also be a tricky problem to manage with our children. Studies show that excessive screen time can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders and obesity.

But tech is an integral and important part of everyone's life, and banning all screen time just isn't realistic. Finding the right balance and making screen time a positive experience for all is key.



Set tech-use rules

Set a few rules that will help you stay connected with the people that matter to you most. Limit technology at the dinner table to encourage conversation. Or unplug an hour before going to bed. Spend quality time with loved ones and help your brain to wind down.



Create no-tech zones

Make technology-free zones where you and your family (or colleagues) won't use smartphones, tablets, TVs or other gadgets. Start with dining areas and other social areas. Doing this will encourage more communication as well as activities unrelated to tech like taking a walk, playing a game or reading a book.



Limit notifications

Fear of missing out, more commonly known as FOMO, is a phenomenon that makes many of us check our phones and social feeds too often. Turn off push notifications and alerts so you won't be tempted by the excess beeps and tweets.



Do not disturb

When you need a mental break throughout the day, try turning on your phone's Do Not Disturb mode. You can set exceptions, in case you're waiting on an important call, and still use other features on your phone if you need to.



Make it less appealing

Go greyscale. Your phone is designed to be alluring, full of eye-catching features and graphics that will grab your attention. Going greyscale makes your phone less attractive so you'll be less tempted to keep looking at it. Turn greyscale on in your settings, usually found under 'accessibility'.



Children and technology

Strike a balance with technology and active play outdoors. Encourage screen time in small quantities whether educational or playing games. Read books on screen, master new skills on youtube.

"The secret to life is finding the right balance to everything you do..."

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Getting support

If you recognise you're becoming addicted to something or know of someone that needs help, there are lots of ways to get support. You can see your GP or contact an organisation that specialises in the area of addiction.

- Alcohol addiction services
- Drug addiction services
- Stop smoking services

To speak to someone anonymously about any type of addiction, call the Samaritans free on **116 123**.

Talk 2 Us



contact our confidential
support service Talk2Us
on **01246 385 290**

GroceryAid



GroceryAid on
08088 021 122

Help

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence. Call 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am to 8pm, weekends 11am to 4pm).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a free self-help group. Its 12-step programme involves getting sober with the help of regular support groups.


Al-Anon Family Groups offers support and understanding to the families and friends of problem drinkers, whether they're still drinking or not. Alateen is part of Al-Anon and can be attended by 12- to 17-year-olds who are affected by another person's drinking, usually a parent.

Drug helpline visit **talktofrank.com** or call FRANK 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0300 123 6600.

Talking therapies such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) available with NHS to support with all mental health.

If you need any more help or are concerned, please speak to Occupational Health or your local HR team.

**the
Greencore
way**



Making every day taste *better*