

This Alcohol Awareness Week, Research Shows Only 3% of Irish Adults Know What the Low-Risk Weekly Alcohol Guidelines Are

- However, 50% of adult drinkers say they would follow the low-risk weekly guidelines if they knew them whilst
- 59% of adults in Ireland drink alcohol on “at least a weekly basis”
- 56% of adult drinkers have engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days

This Alcohol Awareness Week, [Drinkaware](#) want to highlight the importance of adhering to the HSE [Low-Risk Weekly Guidelines](#) (LRWG's) and have launched a new awareness campaign, 'Know the Low' to highlight what they are.

Understanding what the [low-risk weekly guidelines](#) (LRWG) are, is vital to the health of our nation, the charity says and with extremely low levels of public awareness, Drinkaware wants to empower individuals to make informed choices about their alcohol consumption and health.

The research conducted by IPSOS B&A for the Drinkaware Barometer in 2023 shows that half of adult drinkers say they would follow these national health guidelines if they knew them, the highest ever reported figure (47% in 2022, 42% in 2021)*.

The HSE Low Risk Weekly Guidelines are

- No more than 11 standard drinks spread out over the course of a week for a woman
- No more than 17 standard drinks spread out over the course of a week for a man.
- At least 2 alcohol free days per week
- Never consume more than 6 standard drinks in one sitting.
- 6 standard drinks or more is deemed as binge drinking.

A standard drink is a glass of beer or a small glass of wine or a pub measure of spirits.

These health guidelines were introduced to guide the public towards making more informed and positive choices about their health and ultimately, their future.

Interestingly, the data in Drinkaware’s Barometer 2023 reveals that just over half of men and women expect the maximum standard drinks to be lower than the actual guidelines state. For instance, 55% of adults expect that the guidelines for men are lower than 17, while 51% expect the guidelines for women are lower than 11.

In 2023 Irish Adults ranked the below as the top tools and techniques for reducing alcohol consumption*:

- Clear information on what is meant by a standard drink and what the maximum number of drinks a person should drink (HSE Low Risk weekly guidelines) ranked as the top tool for reducing alcohol consumption.

Other helpful tools/techniques included

- Monitoring apps, measuring blood alcohol levels, low or non-alcoholic drinks, drink free time periods (such as “Dry January”) measuring cups and public information campaigns.

Ahead of the launch of Drinkaware’s national campaign, ‘Know the Low’, Dearbhla O’Brien, CEO of Drinkaware says:

“Knowledge is power, and we see this campaign as an essential starting point in supporting the public to reduce and monitor their alcohol consumption.

Understanding what the low-risk weekly guidelines are is vital to the health of our nation. Data from the Drinkaware Barometer shows that 1 in 4 Irish adults report that they “typically” binge* drink when they drink. To change behaviour, people need knowledge, motivation and capacity. The low-risk weekly alcohol guidelines are an obvious starting point in tackling this harmful pattern.

With 36% of adults saying they would like to drink less often, the desire for this information, education and awareness is clearly there. The public want to understand what the low-risk weekly guidelines are, yet, year on year we see that only about 3% of Irish adults can correctly identify them. By providing awareness through our ‘Know the Low’ campaign, the public can make informed decisions that have the potential to positively change their life.”

You can find further information and useful resources related to the low-risk weekly guidelines here: www.drinkaware.ie , including the [Drinkaware Drinks Calculator](#). “

Want to cut back on your drinking? Here’s some expert advice from Drinkaware:

Start Small: Set small, achievable goals. At the same time, it's motivating to give yourself enough alcohol-free days to see and experience the benefits quickly. Why not start with two full weeks including a weekend. Even after this short time you can expect to feel much better, look fresher, have better mental clarity, sleep better and maybe even lose a few pounds!

Understand Health Risks: Learn about the health risks and psychological impact of alcohol to empower you to make informed choices. Through self-education, individuals can arm themselves with the tools necessary to eliminate alcohol.

Consider your motivations: According to the Drinkaware Alcohol Barometer for 2023, 55% of adults admit drinking for coping reasons. Spend some time thinking about why you drink alcohol and consider different coping strategies you could use in times of stress or difficulty. The [Drinkaware Alcohol and Your Mental Health booklet](#) can help, and you can order one on drinkaware.ie for free delivery straight to your door.

Recognise the benefits: Whether you are cutting alcohol out of your life completely or cutting down gradually, remember to recognise the benefits that you're feeling. You may have noticed that you have been sleeping better, that your mental health, energy, and overall well-being have improved, your skin might look brighter, and you might have some extra money in your bank account.

NOTES TO EDITOR:

***The Drinkaware Barometer 2023** is a national population-based survey of 1,000 adults aged 18+ conducted by **IPSOS B&A** in July/August 2023 and included a series of internationally recognised modules relating to alcohol consumption and mental health.

For more information on research projects and publications visit www.drinkaware.ie/research

About Drinkaware:

Drinkaware is the national and independent charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol misuse in Ireland, governed by an independent board and regulated by the Charities Regulator. Registered Charity Number: 20204601

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