**Additional Information**

- When having a night out, look after your friends and don’t leave them alone, especially with someone unknown to you.
- Avoid leaving drinks unattended and don’t take drinks from people you don’t know.
- Walking home alone or accepting lifts from people who you don’t know increases your risk of sexual assault. Always plan your lift home.
- If you’re drunk you’re less likely to stop and ensure a condom is being used and that it is being used properly.
- Sometimes things don’t go as planned, always have someone in mind to call in case of an emergency.


** www.knowyourlimits.info

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**Useful Numbers**

- Community Support Project - Alcohol & Drugs  
  028 2563 6600
- Northern Trust Health Improvement Service  
  028 2563 5575
- Northern Drugs & Alcohol Coordination Team  
  028 2531 1111
- Family Planning Association Helpline  
  0845 122 8687
  www.fpa.org.uk
- Brook Coleraine (under 25s only)  
  028 7034 2178
  www.brook.org.uk
- Brook Belfast (women under 19/ men under 25)  
  028 9032 8866
- Genito-Urinary Medicine - Causeway  
  028 7034 6028
- Genito-Urinary Medicine - Belfast  
  028 9063 4050

info@northerntrust.hscni.net  
www.northerntrust.hscni.net

This document is available, on request, in accessible formats, including Braille, CD, audio cassette and minority language.
Research has shown that there is a strong link between alcohol & sex in our society. Some people have unprotected sex or sex with someone which they later regret after they have been drinking. Alcohol is a risk factor in relation to sexual health. If you choose to drink there are things you need to think about.

Alcohol enters your bloodstream and circulates to other parts of your body, including your brain. It's a potent drug - the more you drink the more it affects you. The effect of alcohol on the brain reduces your level of inhibition and may make you more likely to say or do things that you could later regret.

**Staggering facts**

- 42.6% of young men and 33.6% of young women in Northern Ireland said they were drunk when they first had sex.*
- The consumption of alcohol decreased the likelihood of using contraception.*
- Approximately ¼ of young people questioned had failed to use contraception when they first had intercourse. One of the reasons being they were drunk.*

Being responsible is important – having unprotected sex can lead to pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.

- The contraceptive pill and other methods of contraception will protect against pregnancy, but not from sexually transmitted infections unless you use a condom.
- Remember, if a woman drinks too much and is sick, the contraceptive pill may not work and thus there is a risk of pregnancy.
- If you mix sex with alcohol, you increase the chances of unintended pregnancy and getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

**BE AWARE, BE RESPONSIBLE, STAY SAFE!**

**Useful tips – sexual health**

- Choosing not to have sex is OK but your decision can be affected by alcohol.
- Know how to use a condom and practice when sober. Don’t use a condom if it's out of date or the foil wrapper appears to be damaged. Check the expiry dates regularly.
- Never use a condom more than once!
- Find out where your local family planning clinic and Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics are.
- Emergency contraception is available free of charge from family planning clinics & GP’s. Emergency contraception (pill only) is available over the counter in pharmacies and costs approximately £25.

**Useful tips - alcohol**

- Respect the decision of others. Some people choose not to drink for all sorts of reasons e.g. they don’t like to feel out of control or simply don’t like the taste.
- Reduce your risk of a hangover – have a soft drink for every alcoholic drink or at least drink water before going to bed.
- Watch out for yourself and your friends – don’t lose control!
- Never drink or take drugs and drive.
- Eat before you drink – food helps to slow the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.
- Alcohol and drugs don’t mix – avoid trying it!

**Remember**

Giving consent means freely choosing to say ‘yes’. If you have been drinking and are going to have sex it is your responsibility to ensure that the other person agrees to sexual activity. Remember that alcohol will affect the decisions you would normally make.

**Know your limits**

Men should not drink more than 4 units in any one day and women not more than 3 units.**