

What are the effects of alcohol on sleep?

[Home](#) > [Blog](#) > What are the effects of alcohol on sleep?

What are the effects of alcohol on sleep?

The effects of drinking alcohol before going to bed can mislead some people into believing they are getting a better night's sleep. However, even one or two glasses can affect sleep quality, while regularly drinking above experts' recommended weekly alcohol intake guidelines can contribute to you feeling excessively fatigued the following day.

Dr Natasha Bijlani, Consultant Psychiatrist at **The Priory Hospital Roehampton** explains how falling asleep quickly due to drinking alcohol is negatively outweighed by the disruption it can cause to your sleep cycles, even several days or weeks after a period of heavy drinking.

She says: "The more prevalent, disruptive effects of alcohol use on sleep include more frequent awakenings; worse sleep quality resulting from a reduction of deep sleep and increase of restless Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep stage, alongside earlier-than-usual waking times, leading people to feeling that they did not get enough sleep."

These sleep problems are due to a number of reasons, including:

- ❶ Disruption of biochemicals in the brain that promote good sleep patterns
- ❷ Alcohol intake leading to dehydration which causes thirst
- ❸ The volume of alcoholic liquids consumed together with the effect of alcohol on a hormone that increases urine production leading to a fuller bladder than normal

Why do I find it difficult to sleep after a period of heavy drinking?

Most people don't know that if they stay away from alcohol after a period of heavy drinking, they are likely to have significant sleep problems.

If you drink heavily for many weeks, your body is likely to develop a tolerance and dependence to alcohol, both physically as well as psychologically. You may find yourself drinking increasing amounts as time progresses, to achieve the same effects.

It can be dangerous from a medical point of view to suddenly stop heavy drinking. Those who do are likely to experience unpleasant withdrawal effects, with disrupted sleep being the most common. **The symptoms of withdrawal** can be uncomfortable and these may also keep you awake at night.

This is because alcohol use influences sleeping patterns and it can take the body time to adjust to a normal sleep cycle that is not chemically induced.

How to prevent sleep issues caused by alcohol withdrawal

When sleeping patterns are so disrupted to the point where symptoms mimic **insomnia**, it can be serious if left untreated, potentially affecting a person's ability to maintain sobriety.

Further problems lack of proper sleep can cause include:

- ❶ **Depression**
- ❷ **Anxiety**
- ❸ Hallucinations
- ❹ Increased risk of car crashes and work-related accidents due to lack of focus as a result of sleep deprivation

The best way to prevent sleep issues from developing is by trying to avoid dependence by not drinking daily. Keep the amount of alcohol you consume in one session to three units or less.

Also try to maintain healthy sleep strategies without the use of alcohol and sleep medication:

- ❶ Develop good sleep habits, such as keeping a regular bedtime and rising time
- ❷ Avoid napping
- ❸ Refrain from stimulants like caffeine in the evening
- ❹ Regular physical exercise (but not too close to bedtime) can also be beneficial
- ❺ Read before bed to give you something to look forward to before sleeping and to allow you to 'switch off'
- ❻ Relax in other ways such as taking a warm bath, and avoid using stimulating electronic devices before sleep

Dr Natasha Bijlani adds: "Avoid the temptation to replace alcohol use for insomnia with other chemicals such as sleeping tablets, even ones you can buy over the counter, as all chemically active substances and medications invariably lead to undesirable side effects, some of which can have potentially harmful consequences."

Get in Touch Today

For details of how Priory can provide you with assistance regarding addiction treatment and rehabilitation, please call **0808 231 0706** or **click here to book a FREE ADDICTION ASSESSMENT**. For professionals looking to make a referral, **please click here**

Tags: [Alcohol Rehabilitation](#), [Sleep Disorders](#)

Contact Us

Call our Enquiry Line
0808 231 0706

ENQUIRE ONLINE

FIND A LOCATION

Free Addiction Assessment

Book a FREE Confidential Assessment at your Nearest Priory Hospital Today.
0808 231 0706

BOOK NOW

Alcohol Rehab Information

[Alcohol Rehabilitation](#)

[Alcohol Addiction Withdrawal](#)

[Alcohol Addiction Detox](#)

[Causes of Alcoholism](#)

[Symptoms of Alcoholism](#)

View All >

Can't find what you're looking for?

Contact us by phone: 0808 231 0706 or

Make An Enquiry

Key Pages Careers About Us Mental Health Addictions All Eating Disorders Young People's Services Alcohol Rehabilitation Drug Rehabilitation Drug Detox Anxiety Treatment Stress Treatment Depression Treatment Online Therapy Businesses NHS GPs & Referrers Gender Pay Gap Report News & Blogs Media Centre Stemap	Our Hospitals Priory Hospital Roehampton Priory Hospital North London Priory Hospital Glasgow Priory Hospital Chelmsford Priory Hospital Altrincham Priory Hospital Woking Priory Hospital Bristol Priory Hospital Hayes Grove Priory Hospital Southamton Priory Hospital Ticehurst House Priory Hospital Woodbourne Priory Wellbeing Centre Harley Street Life Works The Manor Clinic The Priory Clinic Manchester The Elphis Priory Arthur House View All Private Hospitals	Contact Us 0808 231 0706 info@priorygroup.com Commitment To Quality The Priory Group aspires to deliver the highest quality of care in the UK across our range of services, which include acute mental healthcare, addiction treatment and low and medium secure facilities. Read More
--	--	--