

Management of Alcohol Withdrawal in Primary Care

Alcohol consumption guidelines are no more than 14 units a week for men and women and spread evenly over 3 or more days with at least 2 alcohol free days per week.

Patient presents at practice with problem drinking or suspected problem drinking or through opportunistic assessment during GP appointment

Women: **Hazardous - More than 14 but under 35 units per week. *Harmful – Regularly consuming over 35 units per week.
Men: **Hazardous - More than 14 but under 50 units per week. * Harmful - regularly consuming over 50 units per week.

Provide patient with a copy of the Patient Information Leaflet in all cases

Ask first FAST question, if score ≥ 3 complete FAST questionnaire (Appendix X)

***Dependence** - a cluster of behavioural, cognitive and physiological factors that typically include a strong desire to drink alcohol and difficulties in controlling its use.

Score 3-8**

Score ≥ 9 consider more problematic alcohol use*

***If daily or almost daily alcohol use, person should not stop their alcohol use abruptly. Alcohol use can be maintained or slowly reduced prior to attending service**

ROUTINE

- Deliver Alcohol Brief Intervention (ABI)
- Refer or signpost to Alcohol Support Services if required
- Hazardous Levels**

URGENT

Patient showing signs of severe alcohol withdrawal (severe agitation, confusion, hallucinations).

NO

YES

Consider referral to the ED as a medical emergency

Refer to Community Tier 2 Services
****Hazardous Levels**
 (See service list for local details)

***PCANOS Referral – GP Attached. Same or next working day response**

***Refer to community Tier 3 services (ADRS/CATs). 72 working hour response.**

***Harmful and/or dependant levels**

Criteria as per ADRS urgent referral

Harmful and/or dependant levels*

Consider urgent referral if...

- The patient is a repeat attendee at practice and/or ED
- The patient is requesting unsupported detoxification through prescribing
- The patient is displaying mild signs of alcohol withdrawal
- The patient has markers of liver disease

If daily or almost daily alcohol use, person should not stop their alcohol use abruptly. Alcohol use can be maintained or slowly reduced prior to attending a service

Referral picked up as per local contact and waiting times protocol
 (See service list for local details)

