



Media information

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Devon people challenged to rethink their drink

Thousands of people in Devon are regularly drinking at dangerous levels, NHS Devon has revealed.

More than 2,500 people in the county are putting their health at risk by drinking significantly more than the recommend limit.

Alcohol awareness week is taking place between 19-25 October and research shows more than 18,000 people in the county have an alcohol dependency.

The theme of this year's campaign is asking people to 'know your limits'.

Over a quarter of people in England drink more than the recommended amount of alcohol. Of these, eight per cent of men and six per cent of women regularly drink at dangerous levels.

In 2006/07, 16 per cent of hospital admissions in Devon were related to alcohol consumption.

Dr Virginia Pearson, director of public health at NHS Devon, said: "Alcohol is one of the leading causes of health problems in Devon.

"It's so easy for people to get into a routine of regular drinking without realising they may be putting their own health at risk.

"Drinking regularly over the lower-risk guidelines (3-4 units of alcohol per day for men and 2-3 units for women) can lead to serious health problems including breast and liver cancer, high blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease or stroke.

"NHS Devon has invested £1 million to reduce alcohol related harm. Raising awareness of safe drinking levels and alcohol related harm will lower the number of hospital admissions.

"Waiting times for alcohol treatment are already down to six weeks and we expect this will be further reduced to three weeks by spring 2010.

"One of the best ways to help cut down on alcohol is to keep a drink diary which will help to work out how much you drink.

“If you are going to drink it’s important that you try drinking each drink more slowly or alternate alcoholic drinks with soft or low alcohol ones.

“Getting out of the habit of drinking because you feel stressed is vital and everyone should try to have at least two alcohol-free days a week.”

Ends

For more information or interviews contact Paul Hopkins on 01392 267 647 or 0797 133 0491