Alcohol – The Facts

- Alcohol, or ethanol, is a colourless liquid which is made by fermenting sugars.
- Alcohol has been made and drunk by human beings for thousands of years because of its effects on mood and behaviour.
- Millions of pounds are spent each year on advertising; studies show that young people are more likely to drink if exposed to alcohol advertising.
- The number of children needing medical help after drinking is rising.
- 40% of hospital accident and emergency admissions are alcohol related (after midnight this rises to 70%).
- Research shows that alcohol is a major factor in criminal behaviour;
  - 63% of sentenced male prisoners admitted to hazardous drinking before they went to prison.
  - 69% of male binge drinkers and 45% of female binge drinkers reported at least one violent incident last year.
The Liver

• The liver is a very large body organ which has over 500 important functions.

• It is a pinkish reddish brown colour and is divided into lobes.

• The liver is a vital organ, it is involved in:
  - The productions and excretion of **bile** which allows us to digest fats.
  - The breakdown of **insulin** which controls our blood sugar.
  - The production of the factors which allow your blood to clot when you have been injured.
  - The production of **urea** which you get rid of in your urine.
  - The storage of many vitamins and minerals.
  - The breakdown of substances such as alcohol which would be harmful to the body.

• Without your liver you would not be able to live. Many people who have diseases of the liver need to have a **liver transplant** and there is a long transplant waiting list.
The effects of alcohol on the body

- Alcohol affects all kinds of cells in the body and stops some of them working; the more you take, the worse the effects.

- 2 units of alcohol would be in a pint of regular beer or cider, a large vodka, a glass of wine; the stronger the drink, the more units it contains.

- Alcohol is high in calories (a pint of beer has the same calories as a medium bar of chocolate).

- The liver breaks down most alcohol but some comes out in your breath, skin, and your urine.

- As you drink:

  - After 14-18 units you would move from being out of control of your body systems, vomiting and wetting yourself, to being unconscious; death can occur due to choking on vomit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 units</th>
<th>4 units</th>
<th>6 units</th>
<th>8 units</th>
<th>10-12 units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are more talkative and relaxed.</td>
<td>Your face is flushed and your attention span shortens.</td>
<td>Your reaction time is slower. Your liver is working overtime.</td>
<td>You are likely to be confused and you are much more likely to get into trouble. You are clumsy and likely to have an accident.</td>
<td>Your vision is blurred and you are likely to be dizzy. If you do this regularly your liver will be damaged.</td>
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<td>You are getting dehydrated.</td>
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HELP CARD

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  - You may already be over the drink-driving limit.

- 4 units
  - Your face is flushed and your attention span shortens.
  - You are getting dehydrated.

- 6 units
  - Your reaction time is slower.
  - Your liver is working overtime.

- 8 units
  - You are likely to be confused and you are much more likely to get into trouble.
  - You are clumsy and likely to have an accident.

- 10-12 units
  - Your vision is blurred and you are likely to be dizzy.
  - If you do this regularly your liver will be damaged.