

THE HIGH—WAY CODE

THE GUIDE TO SAFER, MORE ENJOYABLE DRUG USE

(ALCOHOL)



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

INTRODUCING THE GDS HIGH-WAY CODE

GDS knows pleasure drives drug use, not the avoidance of harm. As far as we know no guide has ever outlined the impact of harm reduction strategies on the pleasure users obtain from drugs... until now...



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Ours is a simple premise: as with driving, there are things you need to know and 'rules' you should observe in order to get you to your destination safely. Being aware of these makes you much more likely to get to your planned destination in one piece and much less likely to cause harm to anyone around you.

Please share these findings, they really are important.



THE HIGH—WAY CODE



WHAT IS IT?

The first guide to safer drug use voted for by people who take drugs.

HOW WAS IT WAS DEVELOPED?

GDS asked loads of people who take drugs, as well as other experts, what strategies they thought would reduce the risk of harm when taking some commonly used drugs. As part of GDS2014, we asked people from around the world who had used those drugs in the last year to vote on these strategies. For each strategy we asked:

1. if they usually (i.e. more than 50% of the time) did it
2. to rate how important it is in reducing the risk of harm (10 being the max reduction of risk)
3. to tell us whether using that strategy increased, decreased or had no effect on the pleasure they got from the drug.

WHO DEVELOPED IT?

The guys and gals at Global Drug Survey—a nice bunch of smart people who know a bit about drugs and, with people's help everywhere, will continue to learn more and share what they find out.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Yep follow us on twitter @globaldrusurv
@drugsmeter, like us on Facebook and check out our free apps the drinks meter (www.drinksmeter.com and the app stores) and the drugs meter (www.drugsmeter.com and google play store)

For more interesting info on drugs check out our drugs meter minutes videos on the Global Drug Survey YouTube channel. For suggestions on how to improve GDS, email: adam@globaldrugsurvey.com

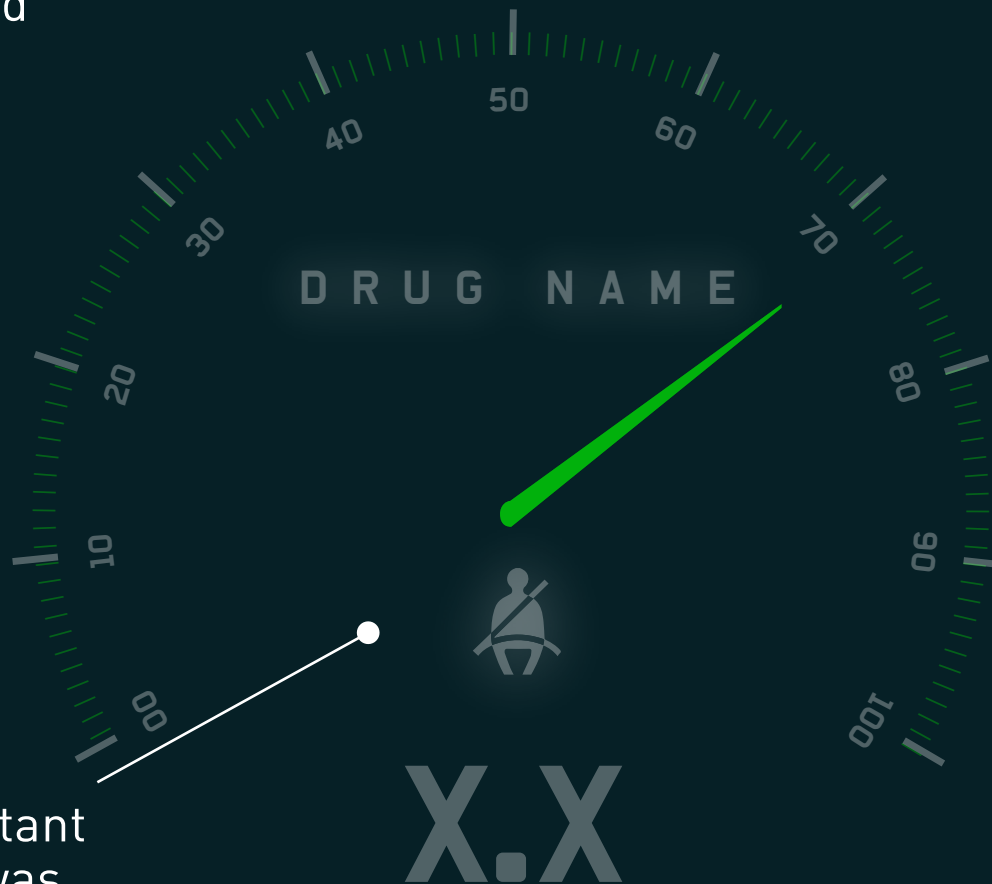
HOW TO READ THE HIGH-WAY CODE

This number indicates the percentage of people who told GDS they usually follow the strategy.

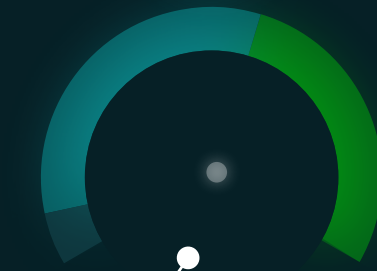


Users who usually do

This dial tells you how important users thought this strategy was in reducing the risk of harm.



Reducing risk from 0–10



Pleasure impact rated by users

Here you can check how many users thought this strategy increased, decreased or didn't affect their pleasure.



ALCOHOL

OVER 70,000 USERS

Other than drink less, don't mix your drinks (especially brown spirits and red wine) and don't take loads of stimulant drugs (or caffeinated energy drinks) when you drink, there were not many other strategies we could ask about.

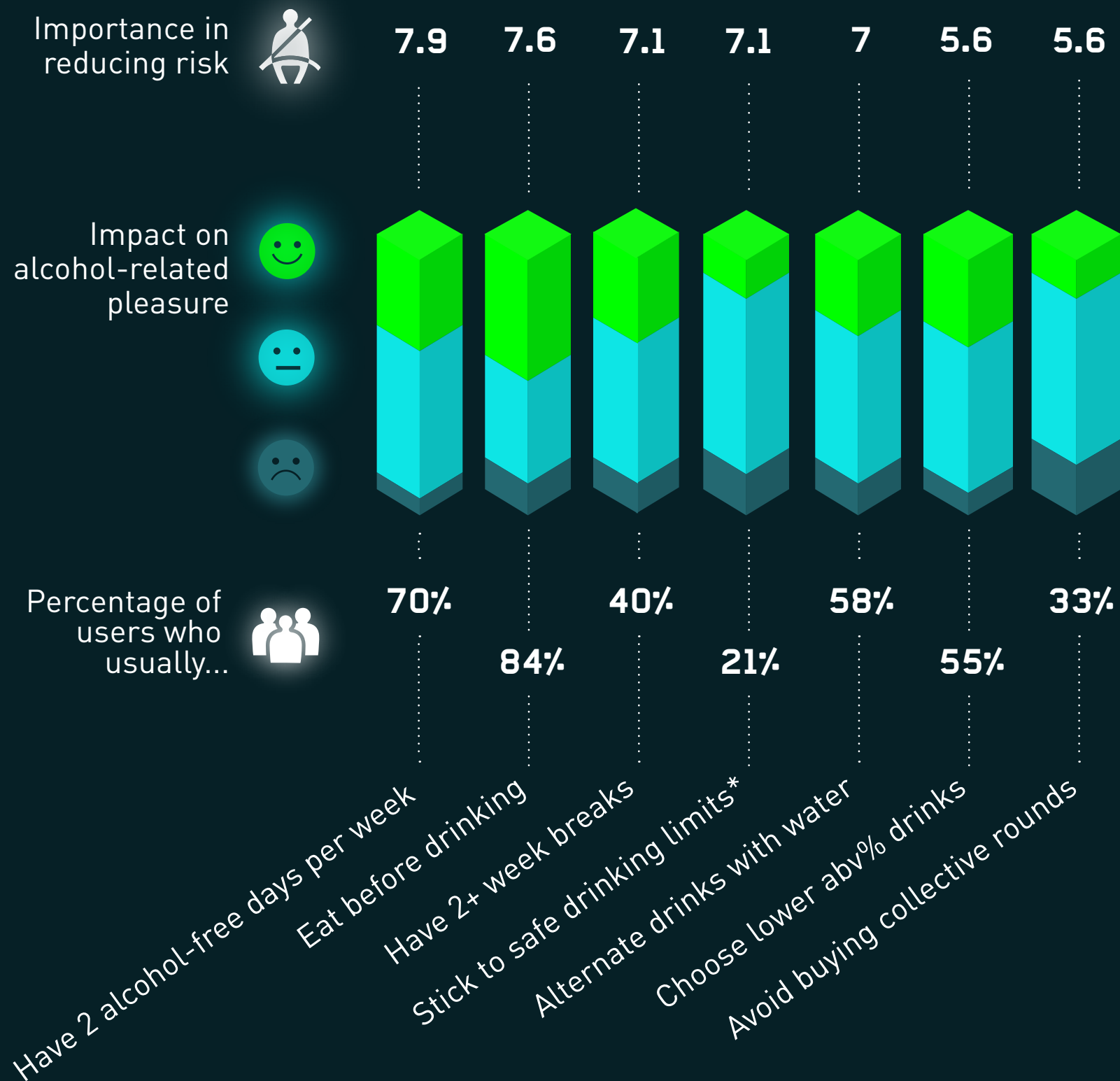
We will also give you an idea of the World Health Organisation's guidelines on safer drinking. GDS suggest you try the Drinks Meter (app stores and www.drinksmeter.com) which lets you compare your drinking to other people, tells you how many cheeseburgers you drank last week and also offers some useful cutting-down strategies.

Usual dose	20-40*	g	
Time to onset	15-30	min	<div></div>
Time to peak	1-2	hrs	<div></div>
Duration of action	3-6	hrs	<div></div>



*g of pure alcohol. Amount depends on the person and the drink

ALCOHOL



*One third of people were unsure what their country's safe drinking limits are.



1 | HAVE 2 ALCOHOL-FREE DAYS PER WEEK



1

HAVE 2 ALCOHOL-FREE DAYS PER WEEK

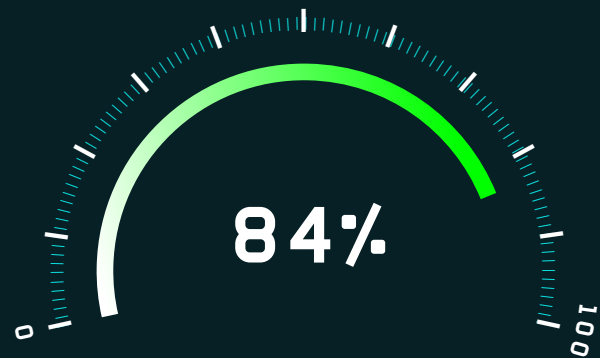
Have at least two alcohol free days per week

There are a number of reasons why you might do this. It gives your liver a rest, it gives your body a rest, and it saves you calories and money. Putting some boundaries down helps you develop a bit of self-control. Obviously, if you're drinking a bottle of wine the other 5 days of the week you are still going to run into serious alcohol-related harm.



2

EAT BEFORE DRINKING

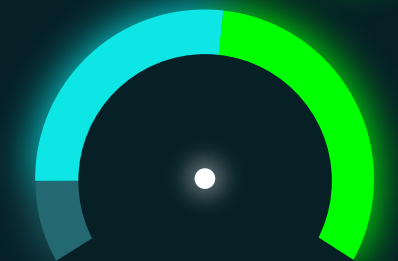
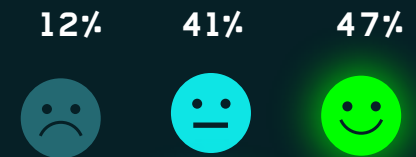


Users who usually do



7.6

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
alcohol-related
pleasure



2

EAT BEFORE DRINKING

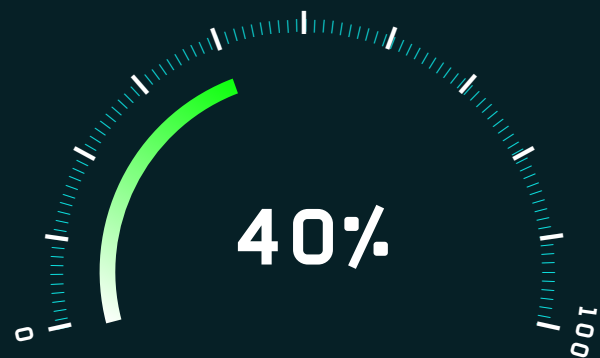
Make sure that you have food in your stomach before you start a drinking session

Having food on board will not protect you from the harm that a binge drinking session places you at. Food does not reduce alcohol absorption, but it does slow it down, meaning you will get drunk less quickly. Food will provide some lining to your stomach reducing the risk of gastritis and throwing up.



3

HAVE 2+ WEEK BREAKS



Users who usually do



7.1

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
alcohol-related
pleasure



3

**HAVE BREAKS OF AT
LEAST 2 WEEKS SEVERAL
TIMES EVERY YEAR**

Give yourself complete breaks from drinking alcohol for at least 2 weeks each year especially after periods of heavier-than-normal drinking

Breaks from drinking can remind you that you don't have to drink to have fun. You might lose a bit of weight. It also give you a chance to see if your drinking is having any effect on your physical or mental health. If you stop and find that people are saying you look better and that you feel better, then that might be worth taking note of.



4

STICK TO SAFE DRINKING LIMITS*



*One third of people were unsure what their country's safe drinking limits are.



4

STICK TO SAFE DRINKING LIMITS

Keep your drinking to within your country's recommended safer drinking limits

It seems many people either ignore these or are just not aware of them. Avoiding binge drinking is the most important thing to reduce the risk of acute harm, while regular excessive consumption will damage your liver and other organs. People who end up in Emergency Rooms, regretting the night before, sleeping with someone they wish they had not, or getting into fights or arguments have almost always been drinking loads and been stupidly drunk.



ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

Most Governments and the World Health Organization (WHO) have guidelines that set out the recommended upper limits of daily and weekly alcohol consumption. Many stress that these are not safe drinking guidelines, just limits that if followed, are associated with a lower risk of longer term alcohol related harm. Because there is no standard alcohol unit (it varies from 8 g of pure alcohol in the UK to 20 g in Japan), what we will give you below is an average of the world's drinking guidelines.

1 UNIT =
10 g of alcohol

 /  / 

330ml can of 4% beer / 100ml of 12.5% wine / 35ml of 37.5% spirit

	Average daily max (range)	Average weekly max (range)	What's a binge	Alcohol free days X week
MALE*	2 – 3 units	10 – 15 units	6 units	2 days
FEMALE*	1 – 2 units	5 – 10 units	4 units	2 days



* National guidelines do vary so we recommend you check your own country's drinking guidelines.

SO HOW MANY UNITS IN YOUR DRINK?

To work out the number of standard drinks/units (standard drink = 10 g pure alcohol) in what you're drinking use this formula:

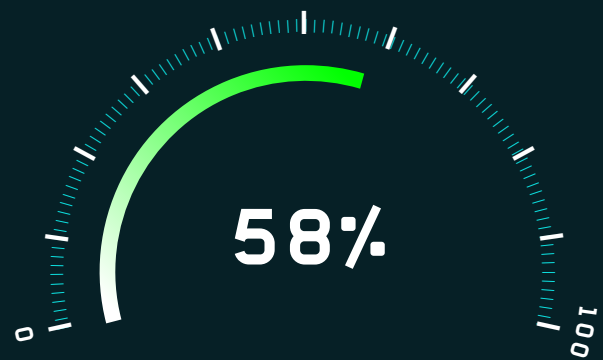
$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{LITRES} & & \text{X} & & \text{ABV\%} & & \text{X} & & 0.789 \\ \text{(AMOUNT OF DRINK IN LITRES)} & & & & \text{(PERCENT BY VOLUME OF ALCOHOL)} & & & & \text{(DENSITY OF ETHANOL AT ROOM TEMPERATURE)} \\ & & & & = & & & & \\ & & & & \text{UNITS IN YOUR DRINK} & & & & \end{array}$$

- No safe drinking limits for those under 18-years-old. In many countries it is illegal to purchase alcohol (age range 16–21 years).
- Women who are pregnant or who are trying to get pregnant are advised to avoid drinking alcohol; if they do choose to drink, they should not drink more than 1–2 units of alcohol once or twice a week and should not get drunk.



5

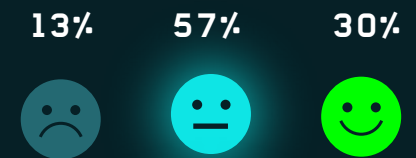
ALTERNATE ALCOHOLIC DRINKS WITH WATER



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on alcohol-related pleasure



5

ALTERNATE ALCOHOLIC DRINKS WITH WATER

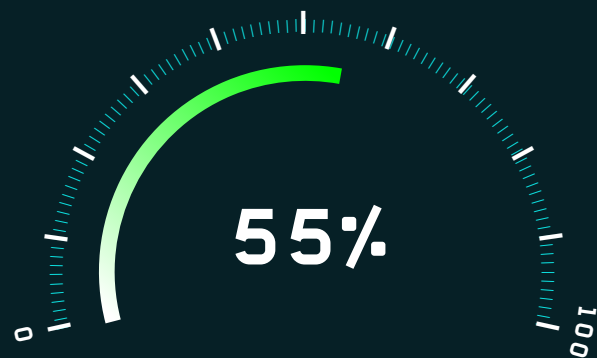
Alternate water or
non-alcoholic drinks
with alcoholic drinks

Reduces dehydration (which is one of the major things that cause hangovers) and slows your alcohol consumption down. It can also make your drinks and your money go further.



6

CHOOSE LOW ABV% DRINKS

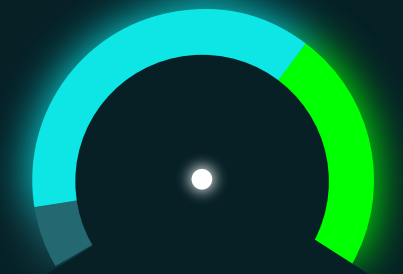


Users who usually do



5.9

Importance in reducing risk



Impact on
alcohol-related
pleasure



6

CHOOSE LOWER ALCOHOL CONTENT BEVERAGES

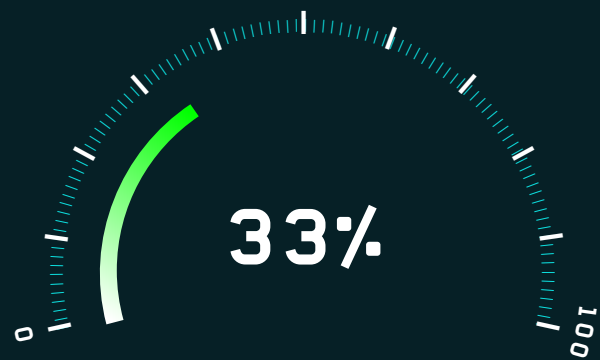
Choose beers / ciders /
wines / spirits with
lower levels of alcohol
by volume (%ABV)

Choosing lower ABV drinks allows you to stay drinking over the course of a session without getting drunk very quickly. Lower ABV drinks can also help reduce your overall alcohol and calorie intake, lower the risk of a hangover and in some countries will be cheaper than higher ABV drinks.



7

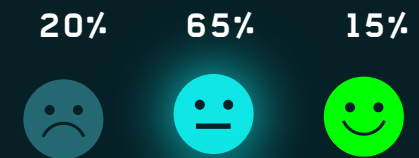
AVOID BUYING COLLECTIVE ROUNDS



Users who usually do



Importance in reducing risk



Impact on alcohol-related pleasure



7

AVOID BUYING ALCOHOLIC DRINKS AS PART OF ROUNDS

i.e. a collection of friends who take it in turns to buy drinks for the whole group

Buying collective rounds can be expensive and means that you are drinking at another person's rate not your own. We know on special occasions rounds are attractive, but they should not be the norm.

