

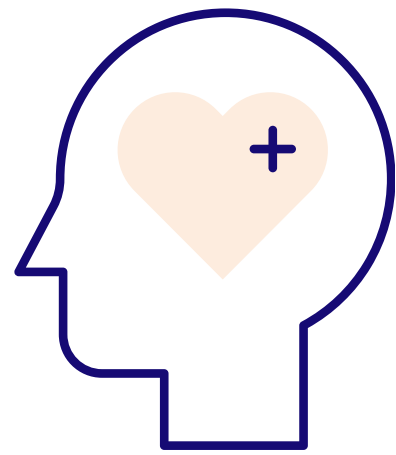
ISABELLA FERGUSON

ALCOHOL & THE BRAIN



DRINK LESS LIVE LARGE!

ALCOHOL & THE BRAIN



Why we think we like to drink (a very quick overview)

Endorphins

Alcohol artificially stimulates the brain's "pleasure centre", releasing endorphins (dopamine and serotonin - our feel good chemicals) almost instantaneously and in high quantities.

Dynorphin

Seeking to re-establish balance (or homeostasis) the brain releases a chemical called dynorphin a downer which acts to chemically suppress our euphoric feeling that alcohol is initially providing. As your first glass of alcohol wears off, you actually end up feeling worse than when you started drinking. So - you reach for another and the cycle starts again.

Adrenaline and cortisol

Alcohol is a depressant, and in order to counteract this (and again seeking homeostasis), your body releases stimulants adrenaline and cortisol - stress hormones! These stimulants stay in your system longer than the euphoria and contributes to restlessness, anxiety and sleeplessness - hello 3am wake up!

Chasing the buzz - the cycle continues

If you keep drinking, it will become increasingly difficult to find the same "buzz" as more counteracting chemicals are being released. The alcohol will also start to impact other areas of your brain and body too, including your senses. Your brain is slowing down! This explains blurry vision, slurred speech, detachment from reality and a numbing of feelings.

Next day

When you wake up the next day, you may feel more inclined to continue the drinking cycle to chase the euphoric buzz again and tune-out the uncomfortable feelings you are having. Remember a large part of this horrible feeling stems from lack of sleep and the prevalence of adrenaline and cortisol in your system.

The thing is, you end up drinking again to get back the feeling that alcohol stole from you in the first place!

It is really helpful to be aware of what alcohol does to our body. It's not our fault to become dependent on it and we cannot undo what we now know!

Alcohol & the brain

Quick facts

A drink will give you 20 minutes of pleasure only!

Your brain jumps into protection mode to restore balance and releases stress hormones and stimulants that stay much longer than the euphoria

Anxiety, restlessness, sleeplessness, regret, fatigue occur as these chemicals leave our system slowly. Hello 3am wake up!

You drink again to feel better and to restore you back to the feeling that you had before alcohol stole it in the first place

**Increasing awareness about these impacts reduces alcohol's allure.
We cannot "unknow" this!**

