

Alcohol Awareness Week

✘ To mark the launch of Alcohol Awareness Week 2010 today, adults across Scotland are being asked how their drinking habits measure up and encouraged to “make every day count”. The week-long initiative aims to raise awareness that by making small changes to our drinking habits – to make sure we’re drinking more responsibly – we can all get more out of our day, week and weekend.

Currently only 15 per cent of Scots are able to correctly estimate the number of units in a normal strength bottle of wine. So, this year’s Alcohol Awareness Week aims to help explain how many units of alcohol drinks contain, and highlight how positive lifestyle choices and sticking to the sensible drinking guidelines can help us enjoy alcohol responsibly.

Launching in Aberdeen’s Union Square, the annual awareness week is now in its fourth year, bringing together the drinks industry, health professionals, the voluntary sector and the Scottish Government to help encourage a culture of responsible drinking throughout Scotland.

Under this year’s ‘How do you Measure Up?’ Unit Challenge theme, people across the country can discover how many units of alcohol they’re drinking on a regular basis, and get useful tips on how they can stick within sensible drinking guidelines of not regularly drinking more than 3-4 units per day for men, or 2-3 units per day for women.

To help Scots get a handle on how much they’re drinking, the Alcohol Awareness Week website – www.alcoholawarenessweek.com – provides an alcohol unit calculator, the ‘Measure Up’ quiz, and lots of information and advice about drinking responsibly.

One way to monitor alcohol unit intake is to use an Alcohol Awareness Week unit measure cup so you can find out how many

units of alcohol you are consuming with each drink. You can get a free cup at the launch event in Union Square.

Other small things you can do to help you drink responsibly, include:

- * Keep the sensible drinking guidelines in mind
- * Eat a meal before you start drinking, or enjoy some snacks while you drink. This helps to slow down the effects of alcohol on your body
- * Drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated – why not alternate alcoholic drinks with water or soft drinks?
- * Try a smaller glass
- * Try a lower alcohol drink instead

By following these suggestions and using a unit measure guide, more Scots will be able to drink responsibly and make every day count – at work, at home and at play.

Public Health Minister, Shona Robison, said: “Too many Scots are drinking too much, too often. But Alcohol Awareness Week gives people an ideal opportunity to find out more about sensible drinking levels and reassess their own drinking habits.

“It can be easy to lose track of what you’ve had to drink – especially as one drink doesn’t necessarily equal one unit – so Alcohol Awareness Week 2010 will continue to educate people about how they can keep tabs on how many units they’re drinking, helping them to make every day count.”

John Drummond, Chief Executive, Scottish Grocers’ Federation added: “Alcohol Awareness Week, is an important annual event that brings together a wide range of stakeholders to promote a common message to encourage Scots to drink responsibly.”

Dr Lesley Wilkie, Director of Public Health, NHS Grampian said: “NHS Grampian and the three Grampian Alcohol Drug Partnerships are pleased to be supporting the fourth national

Alcohol Awareness Week. Many Scots are risking their health by regularly drinking too much and probably don't realise that they're drinking more than they should be. That's why it's more important than ever to remind people of the sensible drinking guidelines and to provide clear information on healthier, safer drinking levels".