

Patient Group success -The risks of regular drinking x-plained in Prudhoe

Doctors from Prudhoe Medical Group and members of the PMG Patient group visited Waterworld on Thursday 26th May and The Glade on Prudhoe Front Street on Saturday 28th May. Their mission; to encourage the town's residents to drink within the recommended limits and reduce their risk of alcohol-related conditions.

Prudhoe Medical Group has been working closely with Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, to highlight the issue and our patient group also wanted to get involved in a positive, practical way.

We believe a lot of the patients we see simply aren't aware of all the health risks associated with alcohol and this seemed a great way to highlight the dangers and ensure people in our community understand units and the safe limits.

Many people don't appreciate that most people who suffer from health problems because of their drinking are not alcoholics or binge drinkers but those who drink every day, or almost every day, over a number of years. Many suffer few immediate consequences, but over time it takes its toll.

Research carried out by Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, has revealed that around a third of North East drinkers - two in five male drinkers and almost a third of female drinkers - are drinking at or above the Government's recommended limits on a daily or almost daily basis. This could be storing up future health problems.

The limits are 2-3 units a day, or roughly a standard glass and a half of wine, for a woman and 3-4 units, or about two pints of regular strength beer or lager, for a man.

Scientific evidence suggests that:

- men who regular drink more than the recommended limits could be four times more likely to have high blood pressure
- women who regularly drink more than the recommended limits could be three times more likely to suffer a stroke
- men and women who exceed these limits could be up to five times more likely to develop cancers of the mouth and throat.

Colin Shevills, Director of Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, previously attended the practice to meet with the Patient Group. He told us, "In the North East, too many of us are drinking more than we should on a regular basis. At the same time, rates of death from alcohol related liver disease are increasing and alcohol specific hospital admissions are higher than the national average.

"It's easier to stay within the limits when you keep track of how much you are drinking. People are often surprised to find out how much they drinking on a daily or almost daily basis as it is fairly common for us to underestimate how much we consume. Keeping a drinks diary is a perfect way to take stock and is a first step towards living a healthier life."



Dr Egan and Mr Alan Greenall from the PMG Patient Group setting up stall at Prudhoe's Waterworld!