



HOW TO SCREEN FOR ALCOHOL MISUSE THROUGH THE AUDIT-C TOOL

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What is AUDIT-C?¹⁻³

AUDIT-C is a simple screening tool used to assess a person's alcohol intake. The results help identify those individuals who may be drinking at a harmful level or those at an increasing risk of drinking at harmful levels.

- There are just three questions in the AUDIT-C.
- Each question has a score of between 0-4 points.
- These points are added together to provide a total score of between 0 and 12.
- This total score is used to assess a person's relationship with alcohol.

When and where should the AUDIT-C be used?³

All hospital admitted adult patients should be screened using AUDIT-C (or a similar screening tool).

The majority of patients will be screened by a healthcare professional when they attend A&E, but if this is not possible, the patients should be screened as soon as possible within the ward they have been admitted to.

The three AUDIT-C questions¹⁻³

The following AUDIT-C questions are to be asked and the answers recorded in the right hand column of the AUDIT-C form. **This last column has been filled in as an example.**

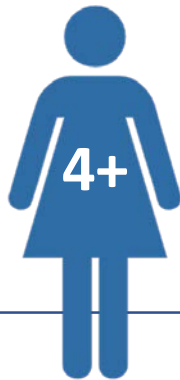
Score	0	1	2	3	4	Your score
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4+ times per week	2
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-9	10+	1
How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	1

AUDIT-C results¹⁻⁴

Once the AUDIT-C has been completed, the final column (featured on the previous slide) should be added together.

For women:

A total score of 4+ =
increasing/higher risk



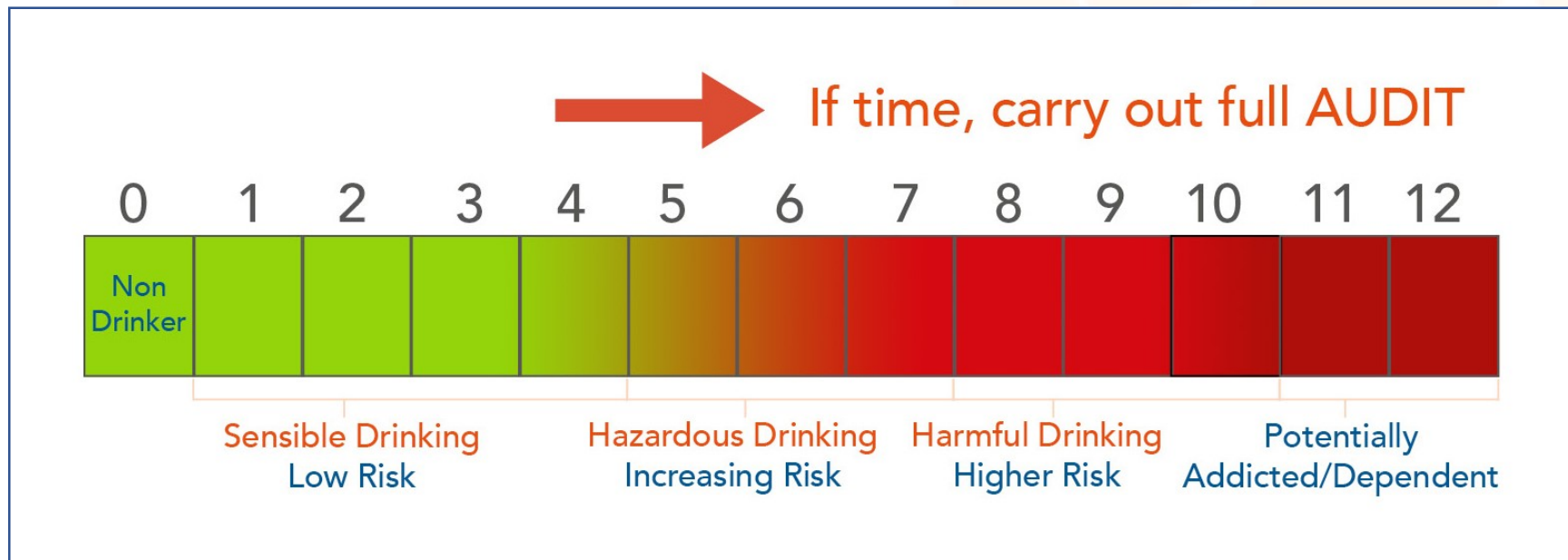
For men:

A total score of 5+ =
increasing/higher risk



AUDIT-C results¹⁻⁴

This scale highlights the increasing drinking risk as scores increase. A score of **4+ for women** and **5+ for men** indicates increasing or higher risk drinking, and requires deeper assessment of drinking patterns and alcohol related complications.



AUDIT-C results: next steps¹⁻⁴

The next steps are dependant on the total score:

Women	Men
0-3	0-4

No action required.

Women	Men
4+	5+

These patients are at an increasing or higher risk of hazardous/harmful drinking.

Provide a patient information leaflet with details about harm, benefit and cutting down to patients who drink above low-risk levels (but are not dependent).

Women	Men
10+	11+

These patients are potentially addicted/ dependent to alcohol.

Explain to the patient that the score indicates they may be drinking problematically and refer to local specialist services.

References

1. Gual et al. Alcohol and Alcoholism 2002;37(6): 591-596.
2. Bowring et al. BMC Public Health 2013; 13: 301.
3. Babor et al. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test 2001.
4. Alcohol Use Disorders. National Clinical Practice Guideline 115.