



Alcohol when you have a liver disease...

Written by Angela Tebay - Young People's Officer on 21/03/2014 16:02

Drinking alcohol is part of growing up, socialising and having a good time – but is it for everyone?

If you have a liver condition or have had a transplant it may feel isolating not being able to join in or you may feel pressure to 'fit in' and put your health at risk by drinking.

We asked young people what their thoughts were on the subject of alcohol, peer pressure and coping with 'nights out':

"The idea bothered me, thinking of going out with all my friends and not drinking but the reality isn't that bad - I quite enjoy it. I can remember most of the night and someone needs to be the taxi! People that are true friends won't care if you're drinking or not. If they don't know why you're not drinking that's usually when people try and pressure you. You can have a good time without drinking, if you join in with the atmosphere people half the time don't notice you aren't drinking."

"If they are true friends they will stick by you and understand that you can't drink but if they pressure you they're not true friends!"

"For me my health comes first so I don't drink at all, I also find it easier to explain that I don't drink at all than that I drink a little bit, that way it's easier to refuse a drink."

"If you go out round town go out with mates who accept who you are. You only have to have one drink if you want to - that's all I do. Think about your health and to be honest, at least you will remember the night and you can still have a fab night out."

*"I feel isolated sometimes but I found that if I go to a party, the fact that everyone else is drunk makes me confident because everyone is making a fool of themselves. Just go to a party and ask them to pour you a large dose of atmosphere....let your hair down. Best thing is you get to remember everything, wake up fresh and you can take the p*** out of your mates for the hilariously embarrassing happenings of the night before... bonus!"*

"All my friends seem to binge drink and most go out every week. This appears to be the "university experience". At first I tried to mingle with the group, get a coke and be like "oh yeah it's got vodka in". Then I just thought; why have I got to pretend to be someone I'm not? I can drink at occasions, I'm not saying that I don't drink but when I go out (which isn't often) I have a drink or two but I know my limit and I tell myself to stop when I know I need

to. I was given a second chance of life and I don't want to blow it by trying to "fit in". In my second year of uni I've found an amazing group of friends who accept me and love me the way I am. If you're honest about your condition people often respect you and what you're doing. All of my friends have always told me "you're not missing out on much" and I honestly believe that. I mean who wants to go on a night out and be that drunk you can't remember what you've done and the good times you and your friends had that night? I'd rather remember the good times and not be drunk."

"I found the first year of university hard but then realised I would much rather be seen as the boring one and not damage my liver any further than be drunk and have more problems with my health! The reality is true friends won't care that you're not drinking. I made some excellent friends at uni and they were very supportive of me being teetotal, I never felt any pressure and still managed to enjoy parties and nights out! And the best part is you can be up the next day bright-eyed and bushy-tailed while your friends nurse hangovers! Although I've not been told avoid alcohol altogether, I find the teetotal approach much easier - it's so much simpler to say "I don't drink alcohol" than to have one and try to turn down shots and rounds once people have had a few. I know that's not everybody's cup of tea, but I really don't enjoy drinking or being drunk anyway, so I just avoid it altogether, and save a lot of money in the process! X"

"My approach is not to make it a big part of my identity not to drink. When I'm in a situation where other people are drinking and I'm not, I'll simply say thanks but no thanks to any drinks, and when people ask why I just say I don't drink for medical reasons. That tends to satisfy most people, and to be honest if it doesn't then as far as I'm concerned I'm not too fussed about knowing them."

"I was lucky with my friendship group that I was never put under any pressure to drink; they are actually very protective of me and always looked out for me. I'm not going to deny that I have had a drink before but never have I got to the point where I was drunk and I don't make a habit of it and will only have 1 or 2 max in a night as I know my limits. I've been through too much that I don't need to add to my problems. You don't need to drink to have a good time."

"I've been quite lucky because my friends have always been very supportive. At first some people were like "well how do you have fun?", but my real friends look out for me and even taste my drink if I think the barman got my order wrong. So basically your real friends will understand but the idiots who pressure you are the ones you don't need in your life. Try non-alcoholic Kopparberg though, mixed berry is lovely!"

"The majority of my friends drink and are starting to drink, it really doesn't bother me. Yes I would probably like to see what being drunk feels like but I know the consequences and I really don't like them. I usually sit and laugh at the funny stuff they do; I'd rather it be me laughing at them than them laughing at me! I don't feel the need to drink; I've never ever tasted even the tiniest bit, the most I've ever done is smell it and that's something I am proud to say even though I'm only 16. So guys don't do it, it's not worth it and think of the consequences from a liver point of view not from a social point of view."

"I have never been pressured into drinking. Recently I have gained the most supportive best friend I could possibly ever ask for, she is so understanding about my liver disease and other health problems and she accepts me for who I am. She is weary about my drinking and she

will only let me get away with a maximum of two and that's it, she will have two with me and that would be enough for both of us."

CLDF has a leaflet about drinking alcohol and the risks [which can be found here](#). Don't forget that you can [contact the young people's team](#) if you would like to talk about anything you read.

Thanks to everyone for sharing their views. If you have a topic you want others' advice on please [contact the young people's team](#).