

Long-term Health Effects of Alcohol

There are several long-term effects of hazardous, harmful or dependent drinking:

Central Nervous System (brain & spinal cord)

- impaired motor skills (slow reaction)
- mood and personality change
- feeling anxious or worried
- fits, blackouts
- hallucinations
- early onset dementia

Circulatory System

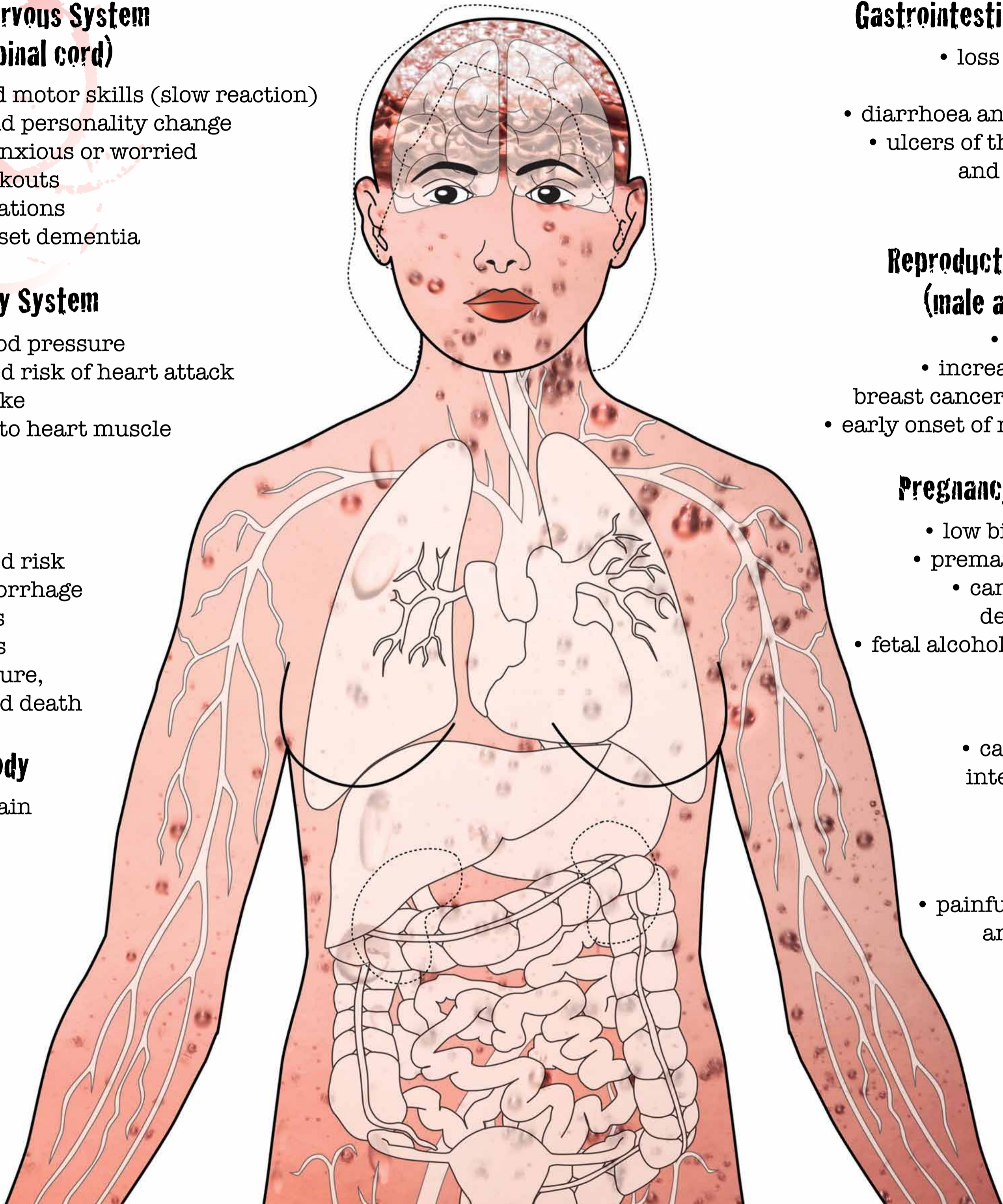
- high blood pressure
- increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- damage to heart muscle

Liver

- cancer
- increased risk of haemorrhage
- hepatitis
- cirrhosis
- liver failure, coma and death

General Body

- weight gain



Gastrointestinal System

- loss of appetite
- nausea
- diarrhoea and vomiting
- ulcers of the stomach and duodenum
- cancer

Reproductive System (male and female)

- impotence
- increased risk of breast cancer in females
- early onset of menopause

Pregnancy & Babies

- low birth weight
- premature births
- can alter fetal development
- fetal alcohol syndrome

Intestines

- cancer of the intestines and colon

Pancreas

- painful, inflamed and bleeding

Increasing Risk or Hazardous Drinkers

are those that are at risk of developing significant physical or mental health problems due to drinking:
14-35 units weekly for women and 21-50 units weekly for men

Higher Risk or Harmful Drinkers

are those that show signs of clear alcohol-related harm due to their drinking pattern which may be:
35+ units weekly for women and 50+ units weekly for men

Physically-Dependent Drinkers

are those that drink daily to avoid alcohol withdrawal symptoms such as shakes, sweating, visual or auditory hallucinations and fits/seizures:
Consumption upwards of 15 units daily

University Hospitals of Leicester



NHS Trust

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