Macintosh HD:Users:camillai:Desktop:Screen Shot 2017-09-01 at 16.07.06.png**Under embargo until 00:01, on Thursday 4th January 2019**

**NOT SO DRY JANUARY! ONE IN FOUR SINGLES RELY ON DRINK FOR DATING CONFIDENCE**

* A quarter of singles (25%) admit to drinking on dates for ‘Dutch courage’ and almost a third say they need it to keep the conversation flowing
* For one in five (21%) admit a drink-fuelled date has led them to kiss someone they wouldn’t normally have; while 17% of singles admit to sleeping with someone after a few drinks and later regretting it
* However, one in six singles (17%) are embracing Dry January, and pledge to quit the booze this month, marking a rise in so-called ‘sober dating’

Singles across Britain rely on alcohol as a crutch when meeting new people, with 10.8m drinks per month consumed on dates1. Yet one in six daters has pledged to give up for Dry January leading to a spike in sober dating.

This is according to new research from [eharmony](https://www.eharmony.co.uk/dating-advice/?p=22891&preview=true) and charity Alcohol Change looking at the relationship between alcohol and dating. Excluding teetotallers, more than half of singles (57%) say that either most or all of their dates involve alcohol in some way, while a further one in eight (13%) always drink on a date.

Many singles tend to lean on alcohol for confidence when meeting a potential partner – a quarter (25%) feel they need alcohol for 'Dutch courage', with women (32%) more likely to feel this way than men (19%). Meanwhile, nearly a third (29%) think alcohol helps the conversation flow and one in 10 (11%) drink on dates due to feeling societal pressure to do so.

While drinking can help singles feel more at ease, there can be negative consequences – one in 10 (9%) drinkers has done something embarrassing due to alcohol when out on a date, with this increasing to 16% for 18-34 years-olds.

What’s more, one in five (21%) admit that they’ve kissed someone they wouldn’t have chosen to kiss if sober. Similarly, 17% have slept with someone while under the influence and later wished they hadn’t – with single men (19%) slightly more likely than women (16%) admit to doing so.

On the plus side, half of singles (49%) say that dating without the drinks allows them to see a potential partner’s true personality and a similar proportion (57%) agree that sober dating means they are less likely to do something they may regret.

Simply going for a walk (40%) tops the list for booze-free first date options, followed by a cinema trip (40%), or moving things earlier in the day and having lunch (36%) or coffee (32%).

**Rachael Lloyd, relationship expert at eharmony, comments:** *“Britain is famously a drinking culture and we typically use alcohol to oil the wheels of conversation and build confidence at social gatherings. But, it’s also worth bearing in mind that alcohol can compromise our sense of reality. We might find ourselves bonding with people more intensely than we’d intended, over-sharing about our own lives or ignoring potential red flags.'*

*“Dry January provides the perfect opportunity to sample sober dating – which though historically a niche trend – is gaining popularity as more singles yearn for meaningful connections. With sober dating you get a far more objective view of who you’re spending time with and can explore chemistry and compatibility in a more realistic context.”*

For more advice and tips, Alcohol Change book Try Dry has expert resources and guidance on how to make the most of Dry January, [available via Penguin Books](https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/111/1117010/try-dry/9781910931998.html). For advice on romantic confidence and sober dating go to [alcoholchange.org.uk](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/)

**ENDS**

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**About the research**

Unless otherwise stated, research was conducted by Opinium on behalf of Third City in December 2018, among a nationally representative sample of 2,010 UK adults.

1 In total, 5% of the UK population is actively dating and drinks alcohol, while Opinium places the UK adult population at 52,079,000. This means there are 2,574,059 single, dating and drinking adults. On average singles have 2.2 drinks during a date, and go on 1.9 dates per month, meaning 10,759,527 drinks are consumed by this group each month.

**About eharmony.co.uk**

eharmony launched in the UK in 2008 with a clear vision: to create more lasting love in the world. The experts at eharmony use an intelligent compatibility matching system (CMS) to match singles, according to 18 bespoke dimensions of compatibility. These are powerful indicators of relationship satisfaction. Today eharmony, fondly know as ‘the brains behind the butterflies’, proudly serves a like-minded community of 60 million members globally and has amassed 5 million registered users in Britain. Find out more at <http://www.eharmony.co.uk/tour>.

**About Alcohol Change**

Alcohol Change UK is a charity that works for a society that is free from the harm caused by alcohol. We are not anti-alcohol; we are for alcohol change. We are for a future in which people drink as a conscious choice, not a default; where the issues which lead to alcohol problems – like poverty, mental health issues, homelessness – are addressed; where those of us who drink too much, and our loved ones, have access to high-quality support whenever we need it, without shame or stigma.