

A new study suggests that a surprisingly simple approach could help people reduce their alcohol consumption.

Researchers found that combining clear information about the health risks of drinking, particularly its link to cancer, with a practical self-monitoring tool, such as counting drinks, led to a significant drop in alcohol intake.

The study involved nearly 8,000 adults who completed surveys over six weeks. Participants were exposed to different public health messages, including guidance on limiting drinking. The most effective approach, researchers said, was a TV advert linking alcohol to cancer, paired with instructions to track the number of drinks consumed.

“This combination not only raises awareness about the dangers of alcohol, but also gives people a concrete tool to manage their intake,” said the research team.

Other strategies, such as setting a weekly drink limit, were less effective, the study found.

Excessive alcohol consumption is linked to a range of health problems, including liver disease, heart disease, and some cancers. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that alcohol contributes to around 7% of premature deaths worldwide.

Experts say that while policy measures such as taxation and restricting availability are important, interventions that encourage individual behaviour change remain critical.

The researchers say their findings could inform low-cost public health campaigns aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm.