

< ALCOHOL & THE BODY

It's important to be aware of some of the different ways drinking alcohol can affect your body. The effects shown here are the same for men and women. Drinking less or none at all is best to improve your health and wellbeing.

EYES

Too much alcohol dilates blood vessels in the eyes, so they can look red and bloodshot. It also affects the signals sent from the eyes to the brain – vision becomes blurred and distances and speeds become harder to judge.

HEAD

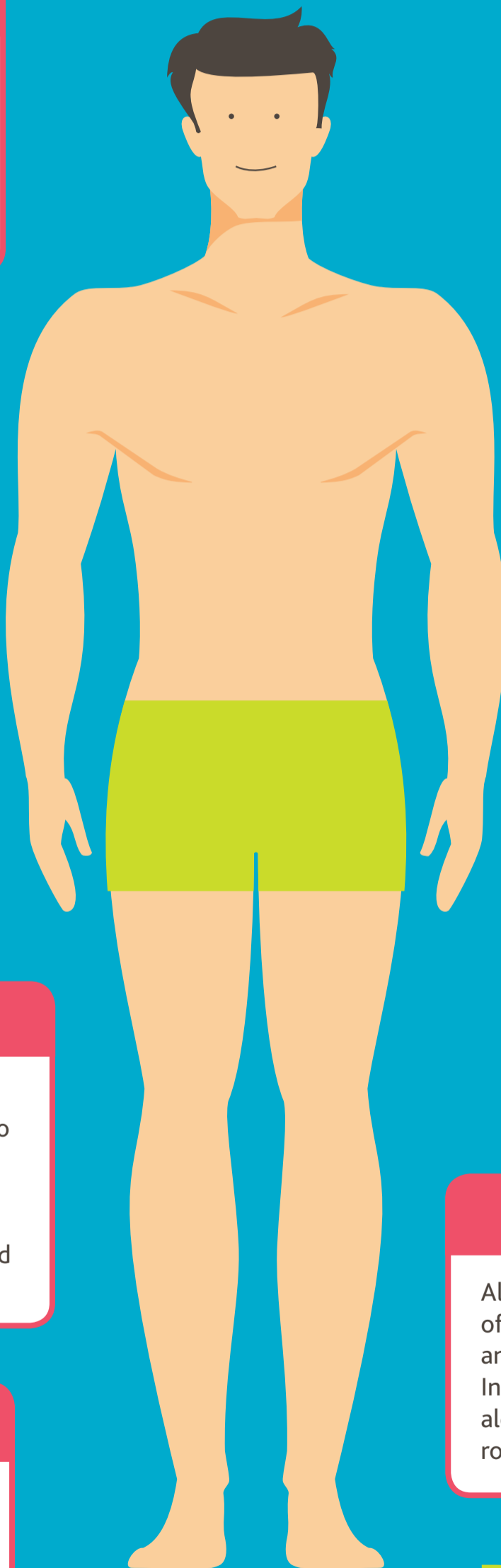
Alcohol can really affect a person's judgement, making them feel more relaxed and more likely to take risks. They might do or say something they might later regret, get into trouble or make a fool of themselves. Drinking alcohol also has a major impact on mental health and how we feel in general, often making existing problems worse while contributing to the development of new ones. Alcohol should never be used to cope with anxiety, stress or problems.

WAIST

Alcohol contains a lot of calories and sugar. These are 'empty calories' with no nutritional value. For example, one pint of cider has 239 calories and 24 grams of sugar, which is five teaspoons. This is roughly 10% of an adult's recommended daily calorie intake.

STOMACH

Drinking alcohol irritates your digestive system, causing your stomach to produce more acid than usual, which can lead to gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining). This can trigger vomiting and diarrhoea.



BRAIN

Alcohol is a depressant so it slows down the brain, the control centre of the body. Alcohol can make you feel happy for a little while but the more you drink, the longer it will take for messages to travel from the brain to the rest of your body. This can result in slurred speech, walking off balance and slower reaction times.

HEART

Drinking over the HSE low-risk guidelines raises your blood pressure, which means your heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body. High blood pressure is one of the most significant risk factors for a heart attack and stroke.

LIVER

On average, the liver can break down one standard drink of alcohol per hour. The type of alcohol, how fast and how much a person drinks can prevent the liver from working properly. Regularly drinking over the guidelines can increase the risk of liver disease and cause irreparable damage.

CANCER

Alcohol is a known risk factor for seven types of cancer - mouth, oesophagus (pharynx and larynx), throat, liver, bowel, and breast. In Ireland, 900 people are diagnosed with alcohol-related cancers every year and roughly 500 die as a result.

DRINKAWARE

WEB: drinkaware.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20204601

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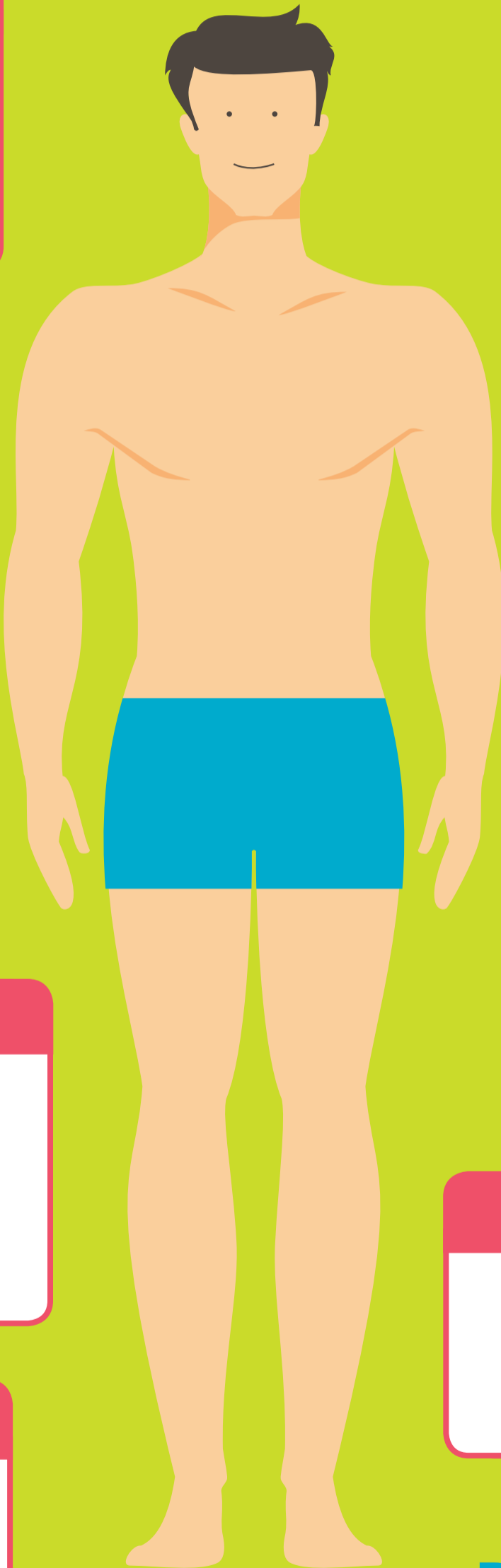
Do you know how alcohol affects the body? Fill in the blanks below. For a completed version see the other side of this poster.

EYES

HEAD

WAIST

STOMACH



BRAIN

HEART

LIVER

CANCER

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