

Fake alcohol

How to identify fake or illegally produced alcohol and guidance on the dangers of consuming these products.

Fake or illegally produced alcohol is alcohol that is made in unlicensed distilleries or people's homes to be sold.

Fake alcohol may be packaged to look like well-known, legally produced brands. This is known as counterfeiting.

Vodka is the most commonly faked spirit. We advise that if you see vodka on sale at a really cheap price, it probably isn't vodka.

Properly produced and certified alcoholic drinks are made with ethanol which is a type of alcohol that's approved for human consumption. Fake alcoholic drinks can be produced using other, cheaper types of alcohol. Drinking them can leave you blind, in a coma or even worse.

Fake alcohol can contain chemicals used in:

- antifreeze
- screen wash
- nail polish remover

How to spot and avoid fake alcohol

Always remember the '4Ps':

- product – watch out for fake versions as well as brand names you have never heard of
- price – if the price looks too good to be true, it probably is
- packaging – look out for poor quality labelling, spelling mistakes and bottles that have been tampered with
- place – always buy your alcohol from a reputable off-licence or retailer

If you suspect someone is supplying or selling fake alcohol then you should report this through your local Trading Standards office. They will escalate your report to the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) or HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) where necessary.

You should seek medical advice if you think you've drunk fake alcohol.