

FORWARD FEED MAGAZINE<<<+HEALTH+INFO+PROGRESS+

## In This Issue:

- Alcohol Addiction
- Drinking
- Alcohol: Really Bad
- How to Quit

# Alcohol is a Dangerous Drug

## HERE'S WHY...





# WHY IS ALCOHOL A PROBLEM?

**Alcohol is a dangerous and intoxicating drug, especially if you're young.**

Drinking may seem like a fun social activity, but there's more to it than meets the eye.

Alcohol causes (or makes worse):

- Fatal Car Accidents
- Sexual Assaults
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Illness

**Alcohol related deaths are the #1 killer of all young people each year.**



Over 97,000 people between ages 18 and 24 become victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape each year.

Alcohol causes chronic illness, damages relationships, causes grades to slip, and can even stunt your growth and the development of your brain.

### What is alcohol?

The alcohol in a drink is called **Ethanol**, which is a colorless alcohol made from plants, and is a depressant psychoactive drug.

"Psychoactive" means it alters and impairs your nervous system.

"Depressant" means it becomes hard to concentrate, coordinate movements, and react.

Higher doses can cause unconsciousness, memory blackouts, vomiting, coma or death.

### What Counts As "A Drink"?

Not all drinks have the same amount of ethanol in them. This is why we measure alcohol as a standard drink:

#### What Is A Standard Drink?



=

14 grams  
alcohol



=



=



=



1 Beer

9 Oz.  
Malt Liquor

5 Oz. Wine

1.5 Oz. Shot

A **standard drink** contains 14 grams of alcohol. This is usually equal to one 12 oz beer, one 5 oz glass of wine, or one 1.5 oz shot of distilled spirits. Each of these drinks have about the same effect on a person.

#### What Is Blood Alcohol Content?

BAC, or Blood Alcohol Content, is a measure of how much alcohol is in your body. It can be measured with a breathalyzer or a blood test. The official legal limit is 0.08, but if you are under the age of 21, anything over 0.01 is considered illegal.



# WHAT IS ALCOHOLISM?

**Alcoholism is also known as an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). It impairs a person's ability to control their alcohol use even when it is causing them harm.**

*Some may think alcoholism is a choice, but this is not entirely true. It is actually a chronic brain disease that can be very difficult to overcome.*

It is not that uncommon, either. **One out of every seven users becomes physically dependent on alcohol.** Many live with it their whole lives despite trying to get help.

You can develop an AUD at any age, but since young people digest alcohol faster, they are at a higher risk of developing a dependence.

**Roughly 20 percent of college students meet the criteria for an AUD,** and the only way to avoid developing it is to stay away from alcohol completely.





# ***DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAVE AUD? TAKE THE QUIZ!***

*If you think you or a loved one  
may have AUD, here are some  
questions to ask.*

*In the past year, have you:*

➤ Had times when you ended  
up drinking more than you  
intended?

➤ More than once wanted to  
cut down or stop drinking,  
but couldn't?

➤ Spent a lot of time drinking,  
being sick or getting over a  
hangover?

➤ Experienced craving or urge  
to drink?

➤ Found that drinking or being  
sick from drinking often  
interfered with taking care of your  
home or family, doing your job, or  
performing at school?

➤ Continued to drink even  
though it was causing  
trouble with your family or  
friends?

➤ Given up or cut back  
on activities that were  
important or interesting to you in  
order to drink?

➤ More than once gotten  
into situations while or  
after drinking that increased  
your chances of getting hurt  
(such as driving, swimming,  
using machinery, walking in a  
dangerous area, or having unsafe  
sex)?

➤ Continued to drink even  
though it was making you  
feel depressed or anxious or  
adding to another health problem,  
or after having had a memory  
blackout?

➤ Had to drink much more  
than you once did to get the  
effect you want?

➤ Found that when the effects  
of alcohol were wearing off,  
you had withdrawal symptoms,  
such as trouble sleeping,  
shakiness, irritability, anxiety,  
depression, restlessness, nausea  
or sweating? Or sensed things  
that were not there?

**Anyone meeting any 2 of the 11 criteria during the same 12-month period gets a diagnosis of AUD. If you or anyone you know has an alcohol problem and needs help, see the resources at the back of this magazine.**





# THE *CYCLE* OF ADDICTION

Alcohol's powerful effects on the brain.

## What happens as substance abuse begins to take hold?

As a person misuses alcohol, changes start happening in the brain that can lead to a long-term addiction. The cycle of addiction has three parts which keep repeating themselves:

**1** *Intoxication* happens when a person drinks alcohol and their brain releases chemicals that make you want to continue drinking.

**2** *Withdrawal* happens when the brain stops releasing those feel-good chemicals, which creates a negative emotional state and a strong craving to drink again in order to feel better.

**3** *Preoccupation/Anticipation* is the stage where the craving to consume more alcohol becomes so strong that it makes focusing on other things hard to do.

***The easiest way to avoid the cycle of addiction is to never start abusing in the first place.***

If a person is not able to resist the craving long enough for it to go away, then the cycle repeats itself.

These feelings last long after a person quits drinking alcohol, which is why **more than 60% of people treated for a substance use disorder experience relapse within the first year.** A person can remain at increased risk of relapse for many years.

***400,000+***  
***young people***  
***aged 12-17***  
***are thought***  
***to have an***  
***Alcohol Use***  
***Disorder.***





# BINGE DRINKING

**While consuming alcohol at any age is harmful, it's often much more dangerous for young people.**

Young people drink less often than adults, but they tend to drink much more at one time. On average, teens consume about five drinks on a single occasion.

This is called **binge drinking** and it can lead to serious medical problems or even death.

Drinking early in life can lead to problems with alcohol later in life. **Of adults who started drinking before age 15, around 40% say they have the signs of alcohol dependence.**

## **Under 25? Alcohol Can Stunt Your Growth**

Drinking alcohol while the body and brain are still developing can stunt growth and cause permanent damage.

**A person's brain doesn't stop developing until around age 25.**

Add alcohol during this time and it changes how the brain develops, setting a person up for a lifetime of trouble.

The prefrontal cortex, used to make decisions, can be permanently damaged by alcohol and lead to addiction. It's a fact that the hippocampus, the part of the brain where learning

and memory are located, is up to 10% smaller in teens who drink.

Other parts of the body, such as the nervous system, reproductive system and liver are also still developing in young people.

Bone and muscle mass are incomplete, too, and are very sensitive to chemicals like alcohol.

## Putting alcohol into a developing body is a big risk for your health and your future.



## **Don't Buy The Hype!**

Alcohol companies spend **hundreds of millions of dollars** to attract young drinkers. They make and market fruity and flavored drinks to appeal to teens and young adults. Ads show attractive young people drinking and having "fun."

They know that young people are prone to addiction, and if they can hook them while they are young, the alcohol companies greatly increase their chances of gaining alcoholic customers for life.

**Save your money and your health -- don't buy into the alcohol hype.**



# PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol can have different effects depending on weight, gender, etc. But did you know that alcohol effects young people differently than older people? The younger the drinker, the greater the chance of developing an alcohol addiction.

*How alcohol effects a person depends on many different factors.*

**Height and Weight-** One standard drink has a much bigger effect on a smaller person than it does on a larger one.

**Age-** Young people metabolize alcohol faster than older adults. This means they can build up a tolerance much faster, which can easily lead to alcoholism.

**Food and Water-** Drinking on an empty stomach or while dehydrated can cause a person to get drunk much faster, which increases the risk of alcohol overdose.

**Gender-** Females tend to become intoxicated faster than males, regardless of height and weight, because their bodies usually retain less water.

**Genetics-** Certain genes lower your alcohol tolerance and increase your risk of developing a dependence on alcohol.

**Medication-** Prescription and over-the-counter medications can be harmful when mixed with alcohol. They can make you feel more intoxicated, cause serious health problems, and even cause death.



# HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE BODY

## Immediate Physical Effects

Unlike food, which has to be digested, alcohol is absorbed straight into the bloodstream as soon as it enters your body. The heart beats faster and coordination, depth perception, reflexes, vision, judgment, and reasoning become impaired. Alcohol attacks liver cells, destroys proteins, and disrupts the balance of sugar and water in the body.

### Cancer

- Head and neck, liver, breast, colorectal, and esophageal cancer

### Immune System

- Chronic immune system weakness
- Pneumonia
- Temporary weakened immune system up to 24 hours after binge drinking

### Sexual Health

- Increased risk of unprotected sex, sexual assault, contracting an STI or unplanned pregnancy

**Of the over 83,000 liver disease deaths each year, almost half involve alcohol.**

## Long-Term Consequences of Drinking

Not only can alcohol physically change the way your brain develops, it can have long-term effects on your health, school performance, athletics, relationships, physical safety, sexual health, future education, career goals, and criminal status.

### Brain

#### Brain

- Disrupts communication pathways between brain & body
- Memory damages
- Mood & behavior changes
- Coordination problems
- Inability to think clearly

### Heart

- Drooping heart muscle
- Irregular heartbeat
- Stroke
- High blood pressure

### Liver

- Fatty liver
- Alcoholic hepatitis
- Fibrosis
- Cirrhosis (scarring)

### Pancreas

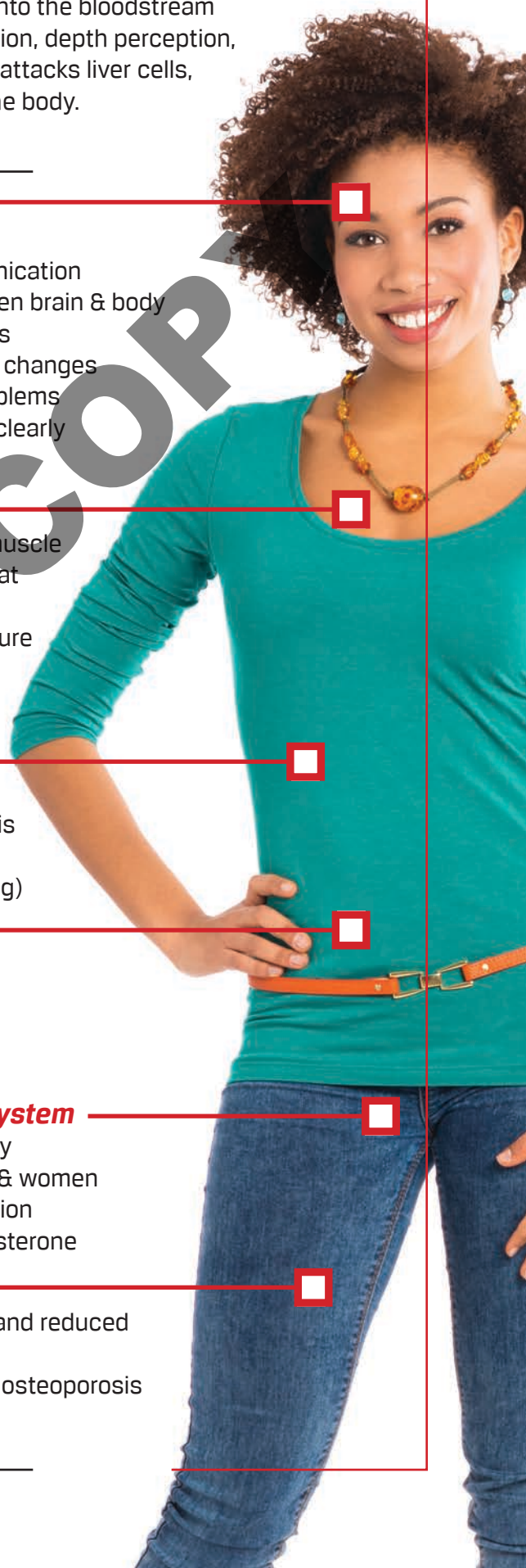
- Release of toxic chemicals
- Pancreatitis

### Reproductive System

- Disrupted puberty
- Infertility in men & women
- Erectile dysfunction
- Decreased testosterone

### Bones

- Bone weakness and reduced bone mass
- Increased risk of osteoporosis





# Alcohol, Sexual Assault and Harassment



Drinking lowers inhibitions, which means users do things they wouldn't normally do. Many people have sexual experiences they later regret, and fail to use protection -- which means they're at risk for catching sexually transmitted infections (STI) or becoming pregnant. **70% of teen pregnancies begin under the influence of alcohol**, and 60% of college women who contracted an STI did so while drunk.

**67% of college men who assaulted women had been drinking, and 50% of their victims had as well.**

***Half of all sexual assaults involve alcohol use by the perpetrator, the victim, or both.***

## ***Relationships***

Many people wake up after a night of drinking to find they have physically or emotionally hurt someone... getting into verbal or physical fights, destroying someone's property, or cheating on a partner.

**Domestic violence cases and assault cases are much more common when alcohol is involved.**



# ALCOHOL CAN AFFECT EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE

## School

Alcohol impairs brain function and can leave users with symptoms of alcohol poisoning (a hangover) for an entire day afterwards. This makes doing well in school difficult, and it means less sober time available to get work done.

**You may get kicked off sports or academic teams and destroy your chances of getting a college recruitment and scholarship.**

## Safety

Since people under the influence are less averse to risk-taking and more prone to violence, they are more likely to take dangerous actions or put themselves in dangerous situations.

**Drownings, burns and injuries from falls and accidents are more common when alcohol is involved.** So are intentional injuries, suicides and deaths caused by violence.

## Legal

Drinking underage can give you a permanent criminal record. **If you are caught using a fake ID, you will have a felony on your record for the rest of your life.**

Having a felony takes away your right to vote, receive federal or state cash assistance, live in public housing, and receive food stamps. Some states even take away more rights than this.

## Career

A Minor In Possession (MIP) or Fake ID conviction can prevent you from getting into grad school or having certain careers. Banks will check your criminal history when deciding whether to give you a loan, including student loans.

**Having a reputation as a drunk is damaging in the professional world.** People are less likely to trust you with responsibility, and most bosses and coworkers will not want to work with you.

*About one in four college students report academic consequences from drinking, including missing class, falling behind in class, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.*





+ ..>> image search:  
+ ..>> 'DRUNK DRIVING'  
+ ..>> results:



# DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

**In their lifetime, one third of Americans will be involved in an alcohol related crash**

**Although only 20% of all drivers, young people are involved in almost half of all fatal car crashes.** Many killed in these crashes weren't even drinking or driving, they were just unlucky passengers.

## ***Alcohol Depresses Brain and Nerve Cells***

Vision becomes blurred, hearing is distorted, speech is slurred, movement and coordination are impaired, reaction time lessens, thinking slows down, and judgement becomes unreliable.

**Drive drunk and you are putting a person with all these impairments in control of a multi-ton, high-speed potential weapon.**

Even one or two drinks can impair judgement and reaction time when driving, even though the drinker may seem sober.

## ***Legal Consequences***

Many states have zero tolerance for underage drunk driving. You are guilty if your BAC is 0.01 or higher.

**If you are under 21, a DUI or DWI can result in losing your license, heavy fines, jail time, and a criminal record.**

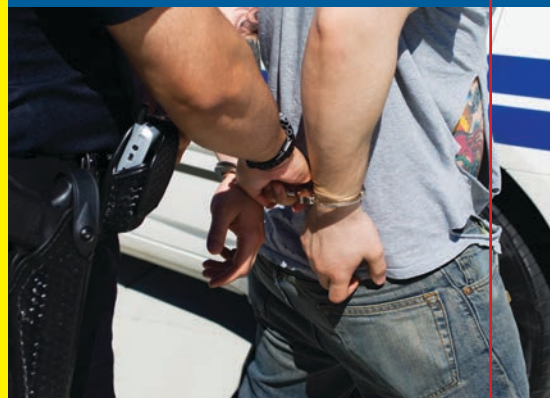
Over 21? The stakes are much higher. Even if you don't hit anyone, you may face one to five years in prison for driving drunk.

Of course, none of these penalties are worse than taking someone's life, or your own, while behind the wheel.

**The facts are clear: driving drunk increases your chances of an accident by more than 10 times.**

## ***What Would You Do?***

One third of young people say they have gotten in the car of a drunk driver, and about 26% of underage drinkers admit that they themselves have driven under the influence. Are you or anyone you know part of this statistic?



+ ..>> CONCLUSION:  
+ ..>> 'DRINK+DRIVE = DEAD'  
+ ..>> END





# RESISTING PEER PRESSURE

You will most likely find yourself in situations when you feel pressured to drink. You may feel like "everyone" is drinking, and you would be an outcast if you don't join in.

The reality is a majority of young people don't drink.

**In 2016, only 33% of high school seniors drank alcohol at all, and for sophomores that number was less than 20%.**

Underage drinking has been declining since the 90s. So, though you may feel alone when around a group of people drinking, you are actually in the majority.

When offered a drink, you can always decline. **Make direct eye contact with the person trying to pressure you, and politely and firmly tell them you'd rather not drink.**

Chances are, they will respect your decision, but if they don't, you can say you'd prefer something else to drink, suggest something else to do, give a valid excuse, or if all else fails, just remove yourself from the situation.

**When being pressured, it's OK to tell a lie.** Tell them you don't like the taste, you're on a medication, you feel like you're getting a headache, you have to

drive yourself home, or that your parents would give you a severe punishment. **Say whatever is necessary to get them off your back.**

Sometimes, you might need to find new friends, and distance yourself from your old ones.

**If you have friends that try to force you to drink, they probably don't have your best interests at heart.**



***A good friend will respect your decision not to drink.***



# HOW TO SEEK HELP FOR PROBLEMS WITH ALCOHOL

**If you, a friend, or a loved one has developed a problem with alcohol or is afraid they might in the future, there are many ways to seek help.**

Guidance counselors help students find resources for overcoming substance abuse and addiction and can give you advice and direction.

If you have a trusted adult, a family member, a coach, a club leader, a church member or official, ask them for help as well.

Many colleges have programs or other resources to help students cope with alcohol-related problems, or you may be able to find a support group in your community.

If none of these are an option, national hotlines and online resources can offer assistance.

Neither asking for help or having a substance abuse problem means you are weak. It is much easier to treat and overcome these issues when you are young, so that you don't develop ongoing, long-term problems with them in adulthood.



# ***Make Smart Decisions, Even When It's Hard***

Resisting the pressure to drink can be hard, especially when you're young, but it's not impossible. You don't have to drink to have fun or have a social life, and people from all walks of life go most or all of their lives without drinking at all.

People make mistakes, but fortunately, there are tons of ways to get help if you or someone you know ends up having a problem with alcohol.

**It is never too late or too early to make the decision to protect your health, your safety, your relationships, and your future.**

**Steer clear of alcohol.**

## ***Additional Resources for Getting Help or Learning More***

### **SAMHSA's National Helpline:**

1-800-662-HELP (4357)  
24/7, English and Spanish  
[www.samhsa.com](http://www.samhsa.com)

### **Al-Anon/Alateen**

888-425-2666  
8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, Monday to Friday  
<https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/>

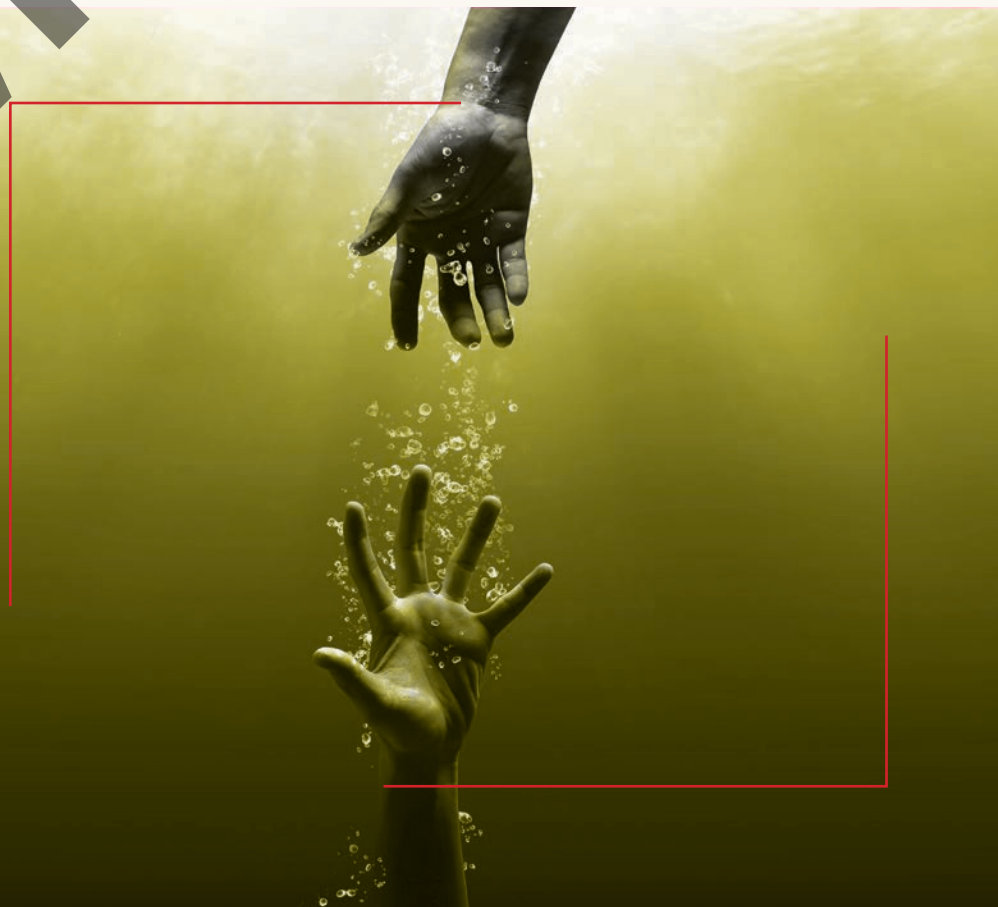
### **Crisis Call Center**

800-273-8255 or text ANSWER to 839863  
24/7  
<http://crisiscallcenter.org/substance-abuse/>

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism**

800-662-HELP (4357)  
24/7  
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**  
**Information on alcohol abuse and underage drinking:**  
[www.cdc.gov/alcohol](http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol)





***STOP.  
THINK.***



***DON'T  
DRINK.***

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