

Substance Misuse Prevention

What is Alcohol?

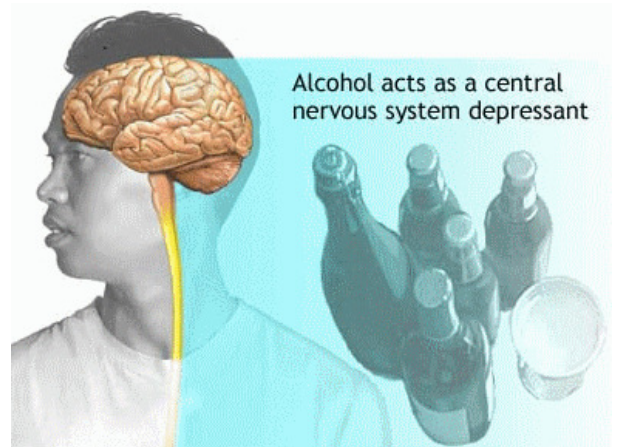
Alcohol is a drug – a depressant that slows down your body's central nervous system.

Short Term Effects of Too Much Alcohol

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Slurred speech
- Loss of coordination skills
- Inability to think and judge clearly
- Inability to estimate distances and decreased reaction times

Long Term Effects of Too Much Alcohol

- The need to drink more to feel the same 'high'
- More money is being spent on alcohol
- Poor appetite, jumpiness, insomnia or sweating when not drinking
- Blackouts when drinking or not remembering drinking
- Bouts of confusion or memory loss



Even When Drinking Stops – Alcohol's Effects Do Not

Alcohol's Effects Begin Quickly

- Initially, alcohol acts as a stimulant, making you feel upbeat.
- Soon after, inhibitions and judgment are affected leading to reckless decisions.

Alcohol's Lasting Effects

- **Alcohol continues to affect the brain and body long after the last drink has been consumed.**
- Even after someone stops drinking, alcohol continues to enter the bloodstream, impairing judgment and coordination for **hours**.

Risks from Long Term Drinking

Injuries. Alcohol is a factor in:

- 60% of fatal burn injuries, drownings, and homicides
- 50% of severe trauma injuries and sexual assaults
- 40% of fatal motor vehicle crashes, suicides, and fatal falls.

Health problems. Heavy drinkers have a greater risk of:

- liver disease
- heart disease
- sleep disorders
- depression
- stroke
- bleeding from the stomach
- sexually transmitted infections from unsafe sex
- several types of cancer

They may have problems managing diabetes, high blood pressure, and other conditions.

Alcohol use disorders. **Alcoholism** and **alcohol abuse** are medical conditions that doctors can diagnose when a patient's drinking causes distress or harm.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Drinking even a *moderate* amount of alcohol when pregnant may cause brain damage and other serious problems.

Bottom line – do not drink during pregnancy or when planning to become pregnant.

How much is in a “drink”?

Recommended Serving Size:

- 12 oz beer
- 5 oz wine or
- 1.5 oz liquor

Woman should have no more than one drink per day and men, two drinks per day.

5 Tips for Responsible Drinking

1. Just say no.
2. Swap alcoholic beverages with caffeine-free non-alcoholic beverages.
3. Designate a driver before the party.
4. Choose your number (of drinks) ahead of time.
5. Remember that alcohol is a complement, not the purpose.

Drinking is always an option and optional, and it is as much as a choice as it is a responsibility. You can stop yourself before you go too far, you just need to choose to do so.

How to be a Smart Host

Before the Party

- Ask someone to help you if problems arise.
- Provide alcohol-free drinks like coffee, tea, pop, fruit punch and juice, along with alcoholic drinks.
- Be prepared for overnight guests by having blankets, sleeping bags and pillows on hand.



During the Party

- Limit how much you drink yourself, so you can keep control of things.
- Mix and serve drinks yourself or appoint someone responsible as bartender. Guests tend to drink more when they serve themselves.
- Serve food, but avoid salty, sweet or greasy foods because they make people thirstier.
- Encourage guests to name designated drivers, leave their cars at home, take taxis or public transport, or walk. Keep cash and taxi numbers ready.
- Never serve alcohol to minors.

End of the Party

- Stop serving alcohol at least **an hour** before the party ends.
- Don't rely on coffee to sober guests up. It only makes them more alert, not sober.

Drug and Alcohol Resource Centres

Canadian Drug Rehab Centres <http://www.canadiandrugrehabcentres.com/>

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health <http://www.camh.net/>

Drug and Alcohol Helpline <http://www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca/>