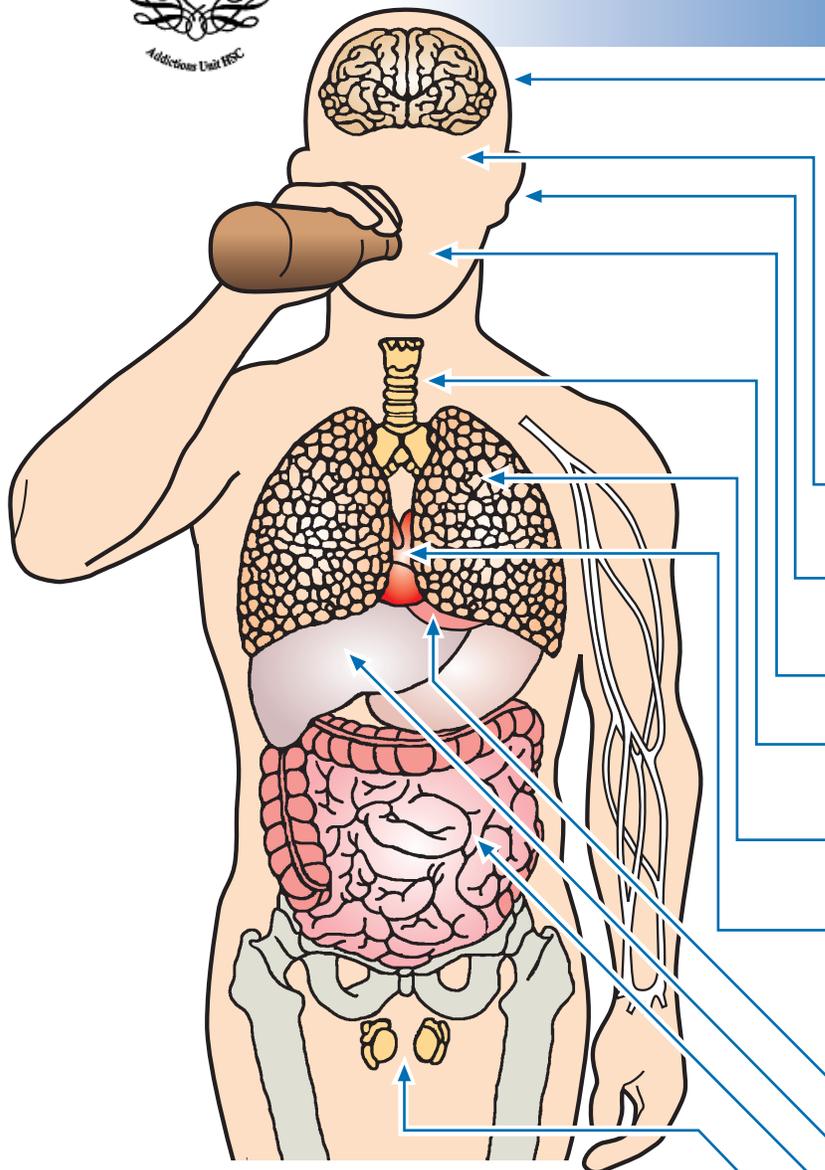




# The Harmful Effects of ALCOHOL



## BRAIN & CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Impaired Behavior, Judgment

- Drinker experiences mild euphoria and loss of inhibition as alcohol impairs regions of the brain controlling behavior and emotion. Alcohol impairs judgment, memory, concentration, as well as causing extreme mood swings, and emotional outbursts.

### Brain Damage & Affect

- Alcohol acts as a sedative on the central nervous system, depressing the nerve cells in brain, dulling, altering, and damaging their ability to respond. Large doses cause sleep, anesthesia, respiratory failure, coma, and death.

### Brain Disorders & Addiction

- Long-term drinking may result in permanent brain damage, serious mental disorders, and addiction to alcohol.

## EYES

- Distorted vision and ability to adjust to lights. Pinpoint pupils and red eyes.

## EARS

- Diminishes ability to distinguish between sounds and perceive their direction

## MOUTH

- Slurred speech. Dulls taste and smell, reducing desire to eat

## THROAT

- Irritation and damage of lining of esophagus, induces severe vomiting, hemorrhaging, pain and difficulty swallowing. Cancer.

## LUNGS

- High amounts of alcohol may cause breathing to stop, causing death. Lowered resistance to infection.

## HEART

- Weakens the heart muscle and ability to pump (cardiomyopathy)
- Heart enlargement, abnormal heart signs, and irregular heartbeat
- Increases blood pressure, risk of heart attack and strokes.
- Inhibits production of white and red blood cells.

## STOMACH

- Irritation of stomach lining, peptic ulcers, inflammation, bleeding

## LIVER

- Chronic heavy drinking may cause alcoholic hepatitis (inflammation and destruction of liver cells) and then cirrhosis (irreversible lesions, scarring, and destruction of liver cells). Impairs the liver's ability to remove yellow pigment and skin appears yellow (jaundice).
- Liver damage causes fluid to build in extremities (edema).
- Decreases production of blood-clotting factors; may cause bruising or uncontrolled bleeding. Liver accumulates fat, which can cause liver failure, coma, and death.

## INTESTINES

- Irritation of the lining of the intestinal tract and colon.
- Chronic drinking may result in inflammation, ulcers, and cancer of intestines and colon.

## REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM MALES & FEMALES

- Sexual functioning can be impaired and deteriorate resulting in impotence and infertility, sometimes irreversible. Females also have high risk of developing breast cancer.

## PREGNANCY & UNBORN BABIES

- Drinking during pregnancy significantly increases chance of delivering a baby with fetal alcohol syndrome: small head, possible brain damage, abnormal facial features, poor muscle tone, speech and sleep disorders, and slowed growth and development.

## OTHER EFFECTS ON CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Impaired visual ability
- Unclear hearing
- Dulled smell and taste
- Loss of pain perception
- Altered sense of time and space
- Impaired fine motor skills and unsteady walking
- Slowed reactions
- Impaired sexual performance

## MUSCLES

- Muscles become weaker and atrophy, pain, spasms, and tenderness.

## PANCREAS

- Significant risk of pancreatitis, a chronic inflammation of pancreas.

## BONES

- Alcohol interferes with body's ability to absorb calcium resulting in bones being weak, soft brittle and thinner (osteoporosis).



# The Harmful Effects of **ALCOHOL**

## What happens to alcohol in the body?

- Alcohol is absorbed through the stomach and intestines and is dispersed through the body through the blood.
- Once in the blood, alcohol is carried to all parts of the body, reaching the brain almost right away.
- Alcohol keeps coursing through the body until the liver breaks it down or leaves the body by means of sweat, breath and urine.
- For most people, it takes between 1 and 2 hours for your body to break down one drink of alcohol.

## What are the short-term effects?

At first alcohol gives you a sense of well-being. After two or more drinks you may begin to feel:

- Drowsy or dizzy
- Your speech will become slurred
- Your balance and vision will be altered
- You may begin to feel hostile or deeply depressed
- Short-term loss of memory may result after a bout of drinking
- When a person drinks too much, they often wake up with a hangover. A hangover is actually alcohol withdrawal that occurs 8 to 12 hours after drinking has stopped. Hangovers include: tremors, nausea, heart racing, acute and severe anxiety, and headaches.
- Drinking a very large amount of alcohol very quickly causes coma, trouble breathing, and sometimes, death.

## What are the long-term effects?

- Some of the most important long-term effects are the social and personal ones. Often by the time people seek help, they've had many losses:
  - Loss of self-worth
  - Loss of family, relationships, and/or friends
  - Loss of job
  - Loss of health
- These losses may add to pain and family suffering, large money debts, and for some people, legal problems.
- Long-term drinking can result in damage to the stomach lining, which causes vomiting, diarrhea, pain and bleeding in the abdomen or bowels
- Damage to the brain from alcohol results in memory, judgment and thinking problems. You may also have problems with anxiety and depression
- Heavy drinking and poor eating can result in Wernicke's encephalopathy that causes drowsiness, confusion, problems walking and abnormal eye movements.



# The Harmful Effects of **ALCOHOL**

- Left untreated, Wernicke's encephalopathy can result in Korsakoff's syndrome. This causes heavy drinkers to lack short-term memory, poor coordination and serious disorientation. Institutionalization is mostly required for people with Korsakoff's syndrome.
- Heavy drinking raises blood pressure, which increases your chances of having a stroke. Damage to the heart can also result in sudden death.
- In men, heavy alcohol use can cause problems with impotence, reduced testicle size, loss of body hair and breast growth. In women, it can cause irregular periods and problems getting pregnant.
- Alcohol increases the risk of cancer to the mouth, throat, liver, pancreas, stomach, large intestine, rectum and breast
- With continuous alcohol use, the liver becomes covered in a layer of fat. Females get a fatty liver, anemia, malnutrition, bleeding in the bowels, gut, and hypertension sooner than men. This may be because females reach higher blood alcohol levels than males for the same amount of alcohol consumed. The reasons for this may be because females have higher body fat and lower body water content than males and females absorb alcohol faster than males due to lower levels of the enzyme needed to break down alcohol in the gut.
- Alcohol induced hepatitis and cirrhosis of the liver result from long-term drinking. Liver cells begin to be replaced by scar tissue and in the end will result in death. Cirrhosis is the leading cause of death among chronic alcohol users.
- **PREGNANCY:** fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a term used to describe a set of symptoms seen in some children born to women who drank alcohol while they were pregnant. Alcohol affects the forming of the fetus. Infants with FAS are smaller than other newborns and have altered facial features such as flat noses and small eyes. They also have some brain damage that often results in mild to severe mental retardation.

## What about tolerance?

- Tolerance to alcohol occurs when chronic alcohol drinkers keep drinking large amounts of alcohol over a period of time. This means that they must drink larger amounts of alcohol to feel drunk.

## What are signs of withdrawal?

- Over time, your body needs alcohol to function because it got used to having alcohol in its system and stopping drinking all of a sudden will result in withdrawal symptoms. When your body does not receive alcohol after long-term use, withdrawal occurs. Symptoms of withdrawal may include loss of appetite, nausea, anxiety, sweating, trouble sleeping, irritability, confusion and tremors. Seizures and hallucinations may also occur. Delirium tremens (D.T.'s) is the most severe effect and is recognizable by agitation, disorientation, high body temperature, speedy heart rate and scary hallucinations (seeing, feeling or hearing things such as bugs crawling on skin). Often alcohol withdrawal requires hospitalization because the withdrawal syndrome may be so severe it requires medical treatment. Usually alcohol withdrawal resolves within 48-72 hours.



<b>TRIGGERS</b>	<b>PLAN FOR TRIGGERS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU ARE ON HOLIDAYS	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU FEEL IRRITABLE OR TIRED	
<input type="checkbox"/> ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS (CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAYS)	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL LONELY OR BORED	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL PRESSURED BY LACK OF MONEY OR DEBT	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU HAVE MONEY TO SPEND	
<input type="checkbox"/> FEEL AFRAID	
<input type="checkbox"/> FED UP WITH LIFE OR WHEN YOU FEEL DEPRESSED	
<input type="checkbox"/> START THINKING YOU ARE HOOKED ON ALCOHOL OR DRUGS	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT FEELING UNDERSTOOD	
<input type="checkbox"/> UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF SELF OR OTHERS	
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT USING SUPPORT SYSTEMS (ISOLATION)	
<input type="checkbox"/> GOING AROUND FRIENDS OR PLACES	
<input type="checkbox"/> RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS	
<input type="checkbox"/> SELF-ESTEEM ISSUES	
<input type="checkbox"/> PROBLEMS AT WORK, SCHOOL OR HOME	
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEN YOU HAVE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE	