

The Myths and Facts About Alcohol Consumption

There are many little known facts and many known myths about alcohol and its consumption.

Some of the myths include:

Myth: "The worst thing that can happen is that I'll pass out and have a hangover tomorrow."

The fact is that death can and does occur from drinking too much alcohol. This is known as alcohol poisoning or acute alcohol intoxication and occurs when the level of alcohol in the body acts as a poison, causing death from the drug overdose. Another way that alcohol can cause death is due to alcohol related accidents, such as drunk driving, falls, and suicide.

Myth: "People pass out from drinking all the time. It's nothing to worry about."

The fact is that you pass out due to the body's inability to tolerate the amount of alcohol that you have put into it. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that works to slow down the heart rate, lower your blood pressure, and slow your breathing rate. Once your brain has been depressed enough by the alcohol, you pass out. The amount of alcohol it takes to make you pass out is dangerously close to the amount of alcohol it takes to cause **death!**

Myth: "The best thing to do for someone who is drunk is to put them to bed and let them sleep it off."

Although this is partly true, the fact is that a drunk person is helpless and must be cared for. **DO NOT LEAVE A DRUNK (INTOXICATED) PERSON ALONE!!!!** Stay with the person, check their breathing, check their skin temperature, and frequently try to wake them.

Myth: "If my friend passed out, I wouldn't call for help. I couldn't live with myself if I got them in trouble".

The fact is that if you don't call for help, your friend may not live to be mad at you. When someone passes out from drinking too much, they are unconscious and have consumed too much alcohol. This person is suffering from alcohol poisoning and needs medical attention.

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Did you know that.

- Between 2% and 3% of the current American college population will die from alcohol related causes.
- Thirty percent of college failure is alcohol related.
- Drinking and driving is the number one killer of Americans between the ages of 17-24.
- In the U.S., 70 people are killed daily in drunk driving accidents, roughly one person killed every 22 minutes.
- 69% of all drownings are alcohol related.
- One in every three suicides involves alcohol.
- The average female college student spends \$150.00 per year on alcohol.
- The average male college student spends \$300.00 per year on alcohol.
- The average DUI arrest costs the charged person \$3000.00.
- Alcohol plays a role in 50% of all arrests.
- 90% of the vandalism that occurs on college campuses is a result of alcohol use.
- 75% to 90% of campus rapes involve alcohol use.
- 75% of men and 50% of women involved in sexual assaults had been drinking prior to the assault.
- The abuse of alcohol is present in 70% of all murders and other violent crimes.
- 54% of alcoholics have an alcoholic parent.
- One out of 3 Americans don't drink - and that's okay too.

How To Identify And Care For An Intoxicated Person

Unfortunately, getting drunk is common on the college campus. Because of this you are likely to come into contact with a person who is intoxicated or experiencing an episode of life-threatening, acute alcohol intoxication (alcohol poisoning). How do you care for this person? How do you tell if the person is acutely intoxicated? What should you do? Listed below are some of the signs and symptoms of intoxication, alcohol poisoning, and the appropriate actions to take. This list is not all-inclusive.

IDENTIFICATION

Alcohol affects each individual differently. The affect of alcohol on a person will vary according to the person's mood, the time of day, amount of food in the stomach, the mixer used, how fast the person drinks, what and why they are drinking.

Signs of intoxication:

- A person who is overly friendly.
- Someone talking loudly, bragging, or using foul language.
- You will usually find the person annoying or arguing with others.
- The inability to light a cigarette, or attempting to light more than one cigarette at a time.
- Someone with slurred or slowed speech, which tends to lose his or her train of thought.
- A person who complains about the service.
- Spilling their drink or missing their mouth.
- Glassy eyes, dilated pupils, inability to focus, sleepy look, and bobbing head.
- Sudden or unexplained mood changes.
- Drinking faster than usual.
- Staggering, swaying, or the inability to walk.

CARE

- First and foremost, **STAY WITH THE INTOXICATED PERSON.**
- Remain calm so that the intoxicated person will remain calm.
- Always be prepared for the unexpected and assess the seriousness of the situation.
- Be aware of the physical dangers and be prepared to get immediate medical help if needed.
- If you have been drinking, get a sober person to help.

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ASSESSING THE INTOXICATED PERSON

- Count respirations, or how many times the person breathes in one full minute. If the person is breathing less than twelve times per minute or stops breathing for periods of ten seconds or more, **CALL 911**.
- Try to wake the person if they appear to be asleep. If you cannot wake the person, **CALL 911**.
- Look at the person's skin. If it is cold, pale, bluish in color, or sweaty, **CALL 911**.
- Stay with the person who is vomiting! Try to keep the person sitting up, if they must lie down, keep them on their side with their head turned to the side. Watch for choking, if the person begins to choke, **GET HELP IMMEDIATELY**.
- Do not attempt to give the person food if they cannot get it themselves. Giving the semiconscious person food could cause vomiting, choking, or aspiration.
- If you cannot keep the person awake, position them on their side in a fetal position. Place a pillow in the small of their back to prevent them from rolling out of this position. This is important to help prevent aspiration if the person should vomit. **STAY WITH THE PERSON** and wake them up frequently. Just because the person is sleeping doesn't mean that the alcohol cannot get to the brain. Alcohol levels continue to rise, causing the person to become unconscious, rather than asleep. If at any time you cannot wake the person up, **CALL 911**.

Any person that has altered consciousness, slowed respirations, or cool, pale skin is experiencing acute alcohol intoxication (alcohol poisoning). This is a medical emergency and you MUST get help.

DO NOT.....

- Laugh, make fun of, or provoke the person
- Exercise the person
- Allow the person to drive a car or bicycle
- Give the person food, liquid, or drugs to sober them up
- Give the person a cold shower; the shock of the cold could cause unconsciousness, or they could drown.

***REMEMBER: THE ONLY THING THAT CAN SOBER A DRUNK IS TIME!!!!**