

Have you ever asked yourself why you drink?

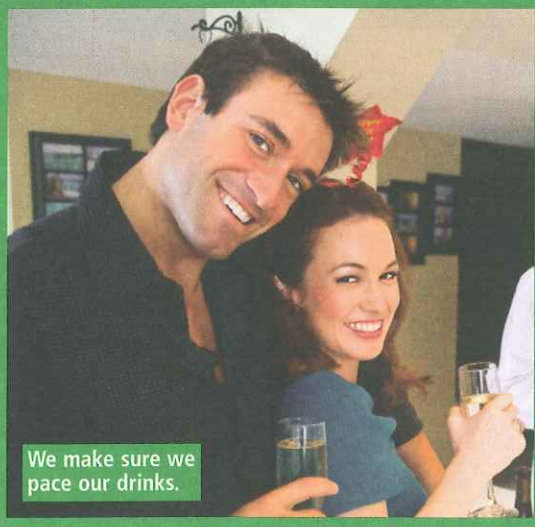
Do any of these sound familiar?

- ◆ "It's how my friends and I spend time together."
- ◆ "It gets my mind off school."
- ◆ "It helps me be social. I'm more comfortable talking to people after I've had a drink."
- ◆ "It helps me fit in at a party."

These are all reasons people enjoy alcohol.

Are there things you don't want from drinking?

- ◆ Getting drunk
- ◆ Hangovers
- ◆ A beer gut or gaining weight
- ◆ Throwing up, feeling lousy and running out of money
- ◆ Missing classes or work because you party too hard



We make sure we pace our drinks.

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Drinking More Safely

Because alcohol affects the way the brain works, any amount of drinking involves risk. But there are ways to reduce the chances of harmful consequences.

How Alcohol Works

Alcohol is a depressant. This means it *depresses*, or slows down your nervous system. Alcohol is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. Then it goes to every organ, including the brain.

In the brain, alcohol affects your ability to process information.

- ◆ It takes longer to react to situations, such as a changing traffic signal.
- ◆ You have trouble with judgment, such as deciding whether you should have sex with someone.
- ◆ You're not as well coordinated.

How Much Is Too Much?

Alcohol is an unusual depressant. At first drinking makes you feel good. People who like the "buzz" from alcohol are probably enjoying these sensations.

But alcohol doesn't follow the rule "the more you drink the better you feel." After a certain point, more alcohol won't make you feel any better. Then drinking starts making things happen that you want to avoid.

Drinking past a blood alcohol level of .06% almost always has negative consequences. You feel sick. You get clumsy. You have trouble with judgment.

Blood Alcohol Level

The total ratio of alcohol to blood volume is known as the **Blood Alcohol Level (BAL)**. Using these charts, you can estimate what the BAL would be for you based on the number of drinks consumed in an hour.

| Men | Drinks during 1 hour | Weight | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 120 | 140 | 160 | 180 | 200 | 220 |
| 1 | 1 | .015 | .010 | .007 | .004 | .002 | .001 |
| 2 | 2 | .046 | .037 | .030 | .025 | .021 | .018 |
| 3 | 3 | .077 | .064 | .054 | .046 | .040 | .035 |
| 4 | 4 | .109 | .091 | .077 | .067 | .059 | .052 |
| 5 | 5 | | | .101 | .088 | .077 | .069 |
| 6 | 6 | | | | | .096 | .086 |

| Women | Drinks during 1 hour | Weight | | | | | |
|-------|----------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 100 | 120 | 140 | 160 | 180 | 200 |
| 1 | 1 | .029 | .021 | .016 | .012 | .009 | .006 |
| 2 | 2 | .074 | .059 | .048 | .040 | .034 | .029 |
| 3 | 3 | .119 | .096 | .080 | .068 | .059 | .051 |
| 4 | 4 | | | .112 | .096 | .084 | .074 |
| 5 | 5 | | | | | .096 | |

This information is not meant to convey that any drinking is safe.

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What Happens When You Drink?

| BAL | Effect |
|----------|---|
| .02% | Relaxed, reaction time goes down |
| .04% | Relaxation continues, buzz develops and reaction time continues to slow |
| .06% | Cognitive judgment impaired, less able to process information |
| .08% | Motor coordination goes downhill |
| .10% | Clear breakdown in judgment and coordination, visibly sloppy |
| .15-.25% | High risk of blackouts and injuries |
| .25-.35% | Can lose consciousness, risk of death |
| .40-.45% | Lethal dose for most people |

.016% per hour People only burn about .016% off their blood alcohol level each hour. **There is no way to sober up more quickly.** Drinking coffee, exercising, vomiting or taking cold showers won't help you sober up.

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How to Get What You Want

Some tips to minimize the negative effects of drinking:

Eat first. With food in your stomach, alcohol gets absorbed more slowly. This will keep you from getting intoxicated as quickly.

Space your drinks. If you feel you need a drink in your hand, alternate alcoholic beverages with nonalcoholic ones.

Pace your drinks. Don't pound, shotgun or straight-shot your drinks. The more quickly you drink, the more quickly you get drunk. Nurse your drink—make it last.

Call it a night after one drink, or don't drink at all, if you have something important to do the next day.

Volunteer to be the sober driver. It's a good way to remind yourself that you don't have to drink to have fun!

Don't Drink, If...

- ◆ You'll be driving.
- ◆ You really don't want to.
- ◆ You're upset, anxious or angry.
- ◆ You're doing other drugs.
- ◆ There's a chance you might need to make a decision about sex.
- ◆ You're pregnant or think you might be.
- ◆ You're taking certain medicines. Ask your health care provider for guidance about drinking and medications.

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How to Avoid What You Don't Want

■ Weight Gain

Alcohol is made up of empty calories. It's a poor source of energy.

The average beer has 150 calories (the equivalent of a hot dog). Even light beer has 100 calories. Drinking in a moderate way will help you avoid undesired weight gain.

■ Hangovers

A hangover is your body's way of telling you you've had too much to drink. Drinking moderately will reduce the risk.

"Remedies" such as loading up on aspirin don't help and can even be dangerous. But drinking water to rehydrate your system can help lessen the blow.

150
calories

The average beer has **150 calories**. Even light beer has 100 calories.

■ Crashes

Make sure someone sober drives you home. Any amount of alcohol in your system will affect your reaction time. The more you drink, the more your judgment and coordination are impaired.

A driver with a BAL of .05% is more than 3 times as likely to have a fatal crash as a driver who hasn't been drinking. At .10% the risk is more than 12 times greater. At .15%, it's over 80 times greater.

■ Screwing Up in a Major Way

Forcing someone to have sex...Falling down a flight of stairs...Having sex with someone you didn't want to have sex with...Not being able to remember what you did...Puking all over yourself or your date...Getting into a fight...Being picked up by the police...

These are all possibilities when your drinking is out of control. Think about the consequences and decide how far you want to go to have a "good time."



We always have a designated driver when we go out.

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What's a Drink?

These all have the same amount of alcohol:

- ◆ 12-ounce beer
- ◆ 10-ounce microbrew
- ◆ 4-ounce glass of wine
- ◆ 8-ounce malt liquor
- ◆ 1¼-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor
- ◆ 1-ounce shot of 100-proof liquor



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Do you drink to get drunk?

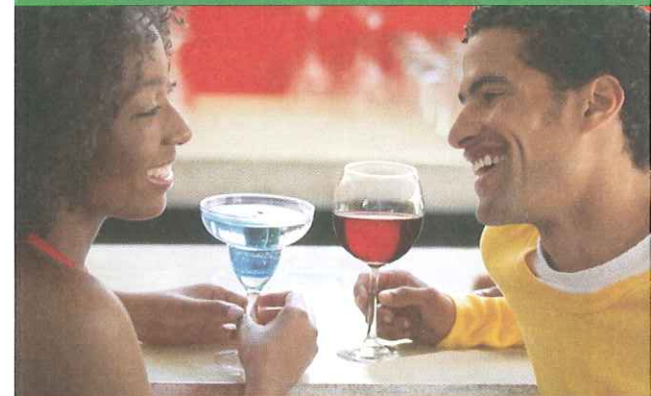
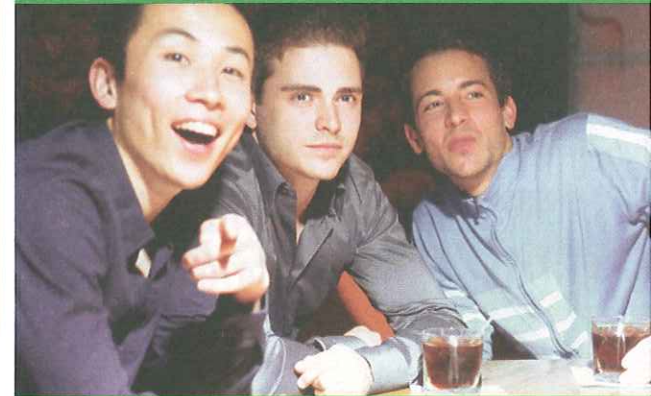
There are ways to reduce the harmful consequences of drinking too much:

- ◆ **Never drive after drinking.** Designate a sober driver *before* you go out.
- ◆ **Avoid drinking games.** Getting drunk quickly can cause alcohol poisoning. People can die from it.
- ◆ **Know when to stop.** Plan how many drinks you'll have over an evening. Switch to water or something nonalcoholic when you reach your limit.

.10%
BAL

A driver with a BAL of .10% is more than **12 times as likely to have a fatal crash** as a driver who hasn't been drinking.

Getting What You Want from Drinking



Professional models were used in all photos.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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