

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol consumption causes a number of marked changes in behavior. Even low doses significantly impair the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely, increasing the likelihood that the driver will be involved in an accident. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts, including spouse and child abuse. Moderate to high doses of alcohol cause marked impairments in higher mental functions, severely altering a person's ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses cause respiratory depression and death. If combined with other depressants of the central nervous system, much doses of alcohol will produce the effects just described.

Repeated use of alcohol can lead to dependence. Sudden cessation of alcohol intake is likely to produce withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and convulsions. Alcohol withdrawal can be life threatening. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol, particularly when combined with poor nutrition can also lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and the liver.

Mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome. These infants have irreversible physical abnormalities and mental retardation. In addition, research indicates that children of alcoholic parents are at greater risk than other youngsters of becoming alcoholics.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS (Am I using them or are they using me?)

DO YOU DRINK OR TAKE DRUGS TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL BETTER IF YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME AT WORK OR AT HOME?

HAS YOUR DRINKING/DRUG USE INCREASED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, YEAR, SIX MONTHS?

ARE YOU ANNOYED OR DEFENSIVE IF ANYONE MENTIONS YOUR ALCOHOL/DRUG USE?

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO LIMIT YOUR DRINKING/DRUG USE BY USING ONLY AT A CERTAIN TIME OF DAY OR ON CERTAIN DAYS OF THE WEEK?

DO YOU START DRINKING OR USING DRUGS SOONER, AND STOP USING LATER, THAN MOST OF YOUR FRIENDS?

HAVE YOU HAD A MORNING DRINK OR HIT IN THE PAST YEAR?

HAS YOUR DRINKING/DRUG USE EVER CAUSED YOU PROBLEMS AT HOME OR AT WORK?

DO YOU EVER FEEL GUILTY OR REGRETFUL ABOUT HOW YOU'VE BEHAVED WHEN YOU'RE USING?

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A MEMORY LAPSE AFTER DRINKING OR USING?

If you answered "yes" to two or more questions, there is a good chance that you may be heading for a dangerous alcohol or other drug problem-if you don't already have one. Only you know the truth about your own chemical use.

Booze Briefs

93% of college students have used alcohol in their lifetime.



20 - 30% of college students have drinking problems.

41% of college students consume five or more drinks in a row-a practice that will intoxicate almost all.

The typical student will probably spend more money for alcoholic beverages than for textbooks.

A poll reported in the *Wall Street Journal* disclosed that 2 out of 3 undergraduates admitted to driving while intoxicated.

College students who are in high academic standing drink less in almost all situations than do their peers who are in low academic standing.

From Lewis Eigen. *Alcohol Practices, Policies and Potentials of American Colleges and Universities, A White Paper*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1991.

