



Health Point

Effects of Alcohol Dependence and Abuse

Anyone can become dependent on alcohol.

- Alcohol dependence (or alcoholism) is a serious disease.
- People who have alcoholism feel a strong need to drink alcohol and cannot control how much alcohol they drink.



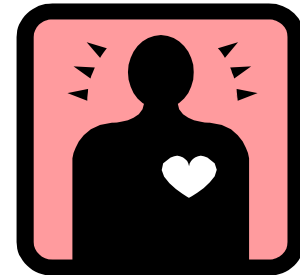
Drinking too much alcohol at once can be dangerous.

- If you drink too much alcohol at one time, you may experience:
 - Vomiting
 - Headaches
 - Loss of balance
 - A hard time thinking clearly
- Drinking very large amounts of alcohol could even cause you to “black out” or die.



Alcohol dependence and abuse can cause serious health issues

- Over time, people who drink a lot of alcohol have a higher risk of developing:
 - High blood pressure
 - Brain and heart damage
 - Liver damage (cirrhosis)
 - Some kinds of cancer (including liver, mouth, and throat cancer)
- Eventually, alcohol dependence and abuse can lead to death.



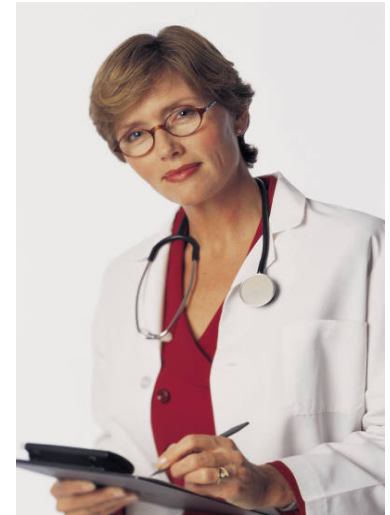
Drinking too much alcohol can also increase your chances of:

- Being involved in a car accident
- Being involved in other types of accidents, including:
 - Drowning
 - Accidents with guns
 - Accidents with fire
- Falling down
- Getting in a fight



Many people drink a small amount of alcohol once in a while.

- Before you drink alcohol, you should ask your health care provider if alcohol is safe for you.
 - It may not be safe, if you have certain medical conditions or take medication.
- You should also ask your health care provider how much alcohol is safe for you to drink.



If you think you may be drinking too much alcohol, tell someone!

- Talk to someone you trust! You can talk to:
 - A doctor, nurse or direct support professional
 - A friend or family member
- You can also ask your friends, family members, and support providers to help you to stop drinking alcohol.



You can keep your body healthy.

- You can set limits on the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Your doctor can help you to decide how much alcohol is safe for you to drink.
- Ask your friends and support providers to help you to remember these limits!

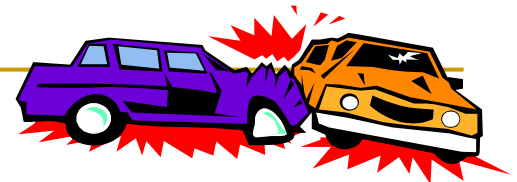


You should never drink alcohol if you:

- Are recovering from alcoholism
 - Are younger than age 21
 - Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
 - Have a medical condition that can be made worse by drinking alcohol
 - Are taking a medicine that should not be mixed with alcohol
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If you drink alcohol, you should not drive a car.

- Driving a car after drinking alcohol is very dangerous.
- Drinking and driving can cause accidents that could hurt you and others.
- Do not get into a car if the driver has been drinking alcohol.
- The more alcohol you drink, the more dangerous driving becomes.



You can make your own choices!

- If you decide that you do not want to drink alcohol, that is okay.
- Even if you are with people who are drinking, you can tell them that you do not drink alcohol.
- Do not let other people pressure you into drinking alcohol if you do not want to, or if your doctor has told you that you should not.



Check out these articles to learn more.



- A DDS Safety Net article for you about healthy lifestyles:
<http://www.ddssafety.net/Archives/Archives/Consumers/HealthyLifestyles.aspx>
 - A DDS Safety Net article for your support provider about alcohol and drug abuse:
<http://www.ddssafety.net/Archives/Archives/Providers/AbuseEducation.aspx>
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These websites have more information.



- Centers for Disease Control:
<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>
- American Academy of Family Physicians:
<http://familydoctor.org/755.xml>
- WebMD:
http://www.webmd.com/content/article/7/2950_853.htm