

## Alcohol facts

The Holmdel Alliance was formed to help our community and its citizens make informed decisions about alcohol and substance abuse. We especially strive to promote a “no-use” message in our schools and with our children.

### Alcohol Facts

#### Legal age to purchase & consume alcohol beverages is 21

*Alcohol is the leading contributor to causes of death each year for those under 21, including deaths from alcohol-related injuries, homicides, and suicides*

*A higher percentage of youths ages 12-20 use alcohol than use tobacco or illicit drugs;*

*Alcohol is the most frequently used drug by high school seniors;*

*Young people begin drinking, on average, at 13.1 years of age;*

*Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21;*

*Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as 2/3 of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students and is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of contacting HIV or other transmitted diseases;*

*The typical American young person will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18 (that is more than for sneakers, gum and jeans);*

*13 percent of all youth, ages 12-17, had at least one serious problem related to drinking in the past year*

*Alcohol can prevent teens from growing to full-size. Heavy drinking in teens has been shown to interfere with muscle & bone growth.*

*Recent brain imaging studies in teens & young adults who drank heavily has shown shrinkage in an area of the brain that is responsible for memory & learning, which indicates that these young peoples ability to learn & remember suffers. The brain doesn't finish developing until around 21 years old.*



### **Alcohol Poisoning**

**Alcohol is a drug** that changes brain chemistry and is lethal in high doses. Despite general knowledge about alcohol intoxication, drinking and driving and some of the long term medical consequences of alcohol abuse, few people realize that deaths from alcohol overdoses occur about as often as for other drugs.

Alcohol can cause death directly by acting on those brain areas that control consciousness, respiration and heart rate. As a central nervous system depressant, alcohol can "turn off" these vital brain areas, resulting first in coma and then death.

#### What You Should Do If You Suspect Someone Has Alcohol Poisoning?

##### **NEVER leave an intoxicated person alone**

**CALL 911** if a person has **any** of the following symptoms

- \*Unconscious or semiconscious
- \*Breathing less than 10 times per minute or irregular breathing (check every 2 minutes)
- \*Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- \*Can't be awakened by pinching, prodding or shouting
- \*Vomiting without waking up

Do not wait for all the above symptoms to be present. Remember that a person who has passed out may die.

**Common myths** about sobering up include drinking black coffee, taking a cold bath or shower, sleeping it off, or walking it off. **But these are just myths, and they don't work.** The only thing that reverses the effects of alcohol is time-something you may not have if you are suffering from alcohol poisoning. Even after a person stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body, that is why it is dangerous to assume the person will be fine by sleeping it off.

Drinking games, beer bongs and shots all promote rapid consumption of alcohol & can result in a high blood alcohol concentration. Alcohol poisoning is most likely to happen when someone drinks a large amount of alcohol very quickly. Because the liver can only process a small amount of alcohol per hour, a person's BAC can continue to rise for several hours (even after someone has stopped drinking) reaching a potentially deadly level.

**Untreated alcohol poisoning can lead to death. Don't be afraid to seek medical help for a friend who has too much to drink. Don't worry that your friend may become angry or embarrassed – remember, you cared enough to help.**

#### **ALWAYS BE SAFE, NOT SORRY!!!**

**Don't take chances when a life is at stake. If you're not sure what to do, it's always better to be safe than sorry. Even if the person is underage, get help if you suspect alcohol poisoning.**

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