

# Don't be that guy – drinking facts

*Anne Wolf, Army Substance Abuse Program*

## Don't be that guy – drinking facts

### What is alcohol?

Alcohol is a depressant, which means it slows your central nervous system. However, it speeds up how fast you become That Guy. This makes women nervous and will leave you depressed and alone with a depressed central nervous system which is even more depressing.

### What happens when i drink alcohol?

When you have a drink, alcohol is absorbed into your bloodstream from the stomach and enters tissues in the body. The effects of alcohol depend on a variety of things, such as:

- Your size, weight, body fat and sex
- Amount of alcohol consumed
- Amount of food in your stomach
- Use of medications, including non-prescription drugs

In general, it takes the average drinker about one hour to metabolize one drink. When you drink more than that, your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) rises, and you start to feel the effects of intoxication. You may start to think that women are only joking when they say, "Leave me alone, your drunk," which will only make you seem more like That Guy when you continue to talk to them.

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### **Short-term effects of alcohol**

Alcohol can have significant short-term effects. Many of these can seriously impair physical and mental abilities and cause other problems:

- Lowered inhibition; increase in risky behavior
- Dizziness
- Talkativeness
- Slowed reaction times and reflexes
- Poor motor coordination
- Altered perceptions and emotions
- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Less ability to reason; impaired judgment
- Memory loss
- Confusion, anxiety, restlessness
- Slowed heart rate; reduced blood pressure

- Slowed breathing rate
- Heavy sweating
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dehydration
- Disturbed sleep
- Bad breath/hangovers

And...

- Drunk Dialing
- Stupid Tattoos
- Becoming That Guy

## **Dangers of alcohol poisoning**

One of the most dangerous short-term consequences of binge drinking is alcohol poisoning, which can lead to irreversible brain damage or even death.

Excessive drinking depresses nerves that control things like breathing or the gag reflex. Drinking too much in too short a time can lead to slow or stopped breathing; irregular or stopped heart beat; choking on vomit; severe dehydration; low body temperature; or too little blood sugar.

Don't ever let someone "sleep it off." Blood alcohol levels continue to rise in the body even when someone is passed out and no longer drinking. Watch for these signs of alcohol poisoning and get help immediately:

- Mental confusion, stupor or coma
- Passed out and difficult to wake
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow or irregular breathing

- Hypothermia (low body temperature)

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### **Long-term effects of alcohol**

Over time, long-term alcohol use can cause permanent damage to the body and the brain, putting drinkers at serious risk of many health problems, including:

- Physical dependence on alcohol
- Liver disease, including alcoholic hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) and cirrhosis (scarring of the liver)
- Heart disease, high blood pressure and some forms of stroke
- Brain damage
- Cancer of the head and neck, the digestive tract and the breast
- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)
- Mental disorders, including increased aggression, depression and anxiety
- Birth defects in children born to women who drink during pregnancy
- Sexual problems and decreased fertility
- Bone damage
- Immune deficiency, causing increased susceptibility to certain diseases
- Permanently becoming That Guy
- Having an entire Web site named after your negative behavior: [www.thatguy.com](http://www.thatguy.com)