

ALCOHOL POISONING

Should you be involved with someone who has had “too much,” you should know:

- **Alcohol is a depressant.** Its use slows down many functions of the body. This slowing down can lead to “passing out” and unconsciousness. Vital organs (heart and lungs) can be slowed to the point of stopping.
- **The body only oxidizes about one ounce (approximately one drink) of alcohol an hour.** If you drink too fast, you may pass out, but your body will still be metabolizing all the alcohol—which will continue to affect your organs and brain.
- **Most people who die from alcohol consumption die from asphyxia.** They suffocate on vomit, or their tongue blocks the airway because they are laying on their back.
- **Life-threatening intoxication is more common from drinking hard liquor.** The alcohol in beer and wine is less concentrated, but still can create life-threatening situations.

If someone is passed out:

- **Never leave them alone.** Leave only to call emergency services, if necessary.
- **Try to wake up a passed-out person.** Call their name, pinch their skin—they should react.
- **Monitor their breathing.** Is it regular?
- **Turn them on their side**—This helps airways stay open if they get sick and vomit, and helps prevent the tongue from blocking the airway.

Get medical help if:

- **They can’t walk, talk, or respond.**
- **Skin is cold, clammy, pale or bluish (especially fingernails, lips, gums).**
- **Breathing is slow, shallow, or irregular.**
- **Eyes are dull and bleary/not focused.**

And remember:

- **If in doubt, call for help.** If you think you couldn’t live with yourself if you got your friend in trouble for drinking, do you think you can live with yourself if he/she dies and you could have done something?
- **The only thing that will sober a drunk person is time.**
- Alcohol exaggerates the mood one is in. If you are depressed when you start drinking, you’ll get more depressed; if you’re angry, you’ll get angrier, etc.
- Alcohol will decrease your inhibitions; it will not increase your sex drive.