



ALCOHOL INSIGHTS

Alcohol use and abuse are serious problems that affect up to 20% of adult Americans. Alcohol, because of its widespread use, causes more problems nationwide than any other drug. (Villabi et al.1991)

Alcohol is responsible for increased crime, suicide, traffic accidents, diseases and death.

Quick Insights

1. Beverage alcohol is a central nervous system depressant.
2. Alcohol is the most abused drug in our society.
3. It can cause intoxication, unconsciousness, or even death.
4. It is as potent as numerous illegal drugs.
5. It can be dangerous when mixed with other drugs.
6. Drinking and driving are a particularly dangerous mixture.
7. Alcohol can cause severe damage to a developing fetus.
8. People often don't realize they are becoming dependent on alcohol.

Beverage alcohol (known as ethanol or ethyl alcohol) is a central nervous system depressant. It can induce feelings of well-being and relaxation. In large doses, alcohol can be fatal.

People can become psychologically and physically addicted to alcohol (alcoholism).

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)—Blood alcohol concentration is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. It is measured in percentages. A person is considered drunk when the BAC is .08%.

There is no quick remedy for drunkenness. It takes about one hour per half-ounce of pure alcohol consumed to sober up completely.

Types of Drinkers

1. Occasional drinkers
2. Light drinkers
3. Social drinkers
4. Problem drinkers
5. Binge drinkers
6. Excessive drinkers
7. Chronic drinkers

Short-term effects of drinking

1. Slower reactions and poor coordination
2. Heavy sweating
3. Blurry or double vision
4. Nausea and vomiting
5. Lowered reasoning ability
6. Doing and saying things you otherwise would not
7. Mental confusion, memory loss
8. Coma
9. Death from respiratory arrest

Health consequences of using alcohol

1. Liver diseases
2. Heart disease and stroke
3. Brain cell death
4. Cancer of mouth, pharynx, esophagus, breast, pancreas, liver, colon and rectum
5. Decreased bone density
6. Damage to eyes and skin
7. Malnutrition and gastric illnesses
8. Sexual problems in men and women

Alcohol is illegal to buy or possess if you are under the age of 21

Know the Risk! Drinking increases the risk of car crashes, falls, burns, drowning and suicide. Play it safe. Do the *smart* thing. **Don't Drink!**