

Student Health and Counseling Services
Medical Services

Health Topics
Alcohol Poisoning:
How to Help a Drunk Friend

Know How Much Alcohol is Safe

In general, if you drink, you should only consume one drink per hour. A drink is defined as one 12-ounce beer, one 4-ounce glass of wine, one 10-ounce wine cooler or one 1-ounce of 80-proof hard alcohol. Factors such as body weight, height and body chemistry should also be considered. Many mixed drinks have more than one serving of alcohol. Be sure to know how much alcohol is in your drink.

When Someone is Intoxicated

- CONTINUALLY MONITOR THE INTOXICATED PERSON.
- CHECK THEIR BREATHING, waking them often to be sure they are not unconscious.
- A DRUNK PERSON should not be put in charge of another drunk person.
- DO NOT exercise the person.
- DO NOT allow the person to drive a car or ride a bicycle.
- DO NOT give the person food, liquid, medicines or drugs to sober them up.
- DO NOT give the person a cold shower; the shock of the cold could cause unconsciousness.

REMEMBER: THE ONLY THING THAT CAN SOBER A DRUNK PERSON IS TIME!!!!

How To Tell If Someone Has Alcohol Poisoning

Call 9-1-1 if you see someone exhibiting behavior that might indicate alcohol poisoning such as any of the following symptoms:

- Cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- Unconscious or unable to be roused
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Puking repeatedly or uncontrollably

Other Important Factors

- Stay with a person who is vomiting! Try to keep the person sitting up. If s/he must lie down, keep the person on his/her side with his/her head turned to the side. Watch for choking; if the person begins to choke, GET HELP IMMEDIATELY, **CALL 9-1-1.**
- If a person drinks alcohol in combination with any other drug, the combined effect could be fatal. **CALL 9-1-1.**
- If the person is not in need of medical attention and is going to "sleep it off," be sure to position the person on his/her side placing a pillow behind him/her to prevent them from rolling out of this position. This is important to help prevent choking if the person should vomit. **STAY WITH THE PERSON AND WAKE HIM/HER UP FREQUENTLY.** Even though the person is sleeping, alcohol levels may continue to rise, causing the person to become unconscious, rather than asleep. If at any time you can not wake the person up, **CALL 9-1-1.**
- Any person that has altered consciousness, slowed respiration, repeated, uncontrolled vomiting, or cool, pale skin is experiencing acute alcohol intoxication (alcohol poisoning). This is a medical emergency and you **MUST** get help. **CALL 9-1-1.**