

Understanding the Effects of Alcohol

Introduction:

You probably have seen people drinking alcohol in real life, on television, in videos, or in the movies. The alcohol might have been beer, wine, or a cocktail. It may have been served in a glass, in a bottle, or in a can. On TV, in movies, in videos, people drinking alcohol may seem to be happy, rich, and famous. Some may seem silly.

Some may appear sad, angry, or even violent. In real life, you may have seen people act in these ways when they have been drinking. Or maybe not. The truth is that alcohol affects different people in different ways. But one thing is sure. Alcohol is very dangerous for a young person like you, and it is illegal, too.



Learn How Alcohol Affects the Body:¹²

- With the first sip of alcohol, a drinker is affected.
- Alcohol passes through the lining of the stomach into the bloodstream. It irritates the stomach lining, which can make a person feel sick. If drinking continues, the person may vomit.
- Alcohol moves through the bloodstream to every organ in the body, including the brain.
- Once alcohol enters the brain, it changes the way a person behaves. Alcohol can make people do things they do not want to do.
- As a person drinks more alcohol, the ability to make decisions is affected. By drinking more and more alcohol, a person may lose balance and be unable to see or speak clearly. The more a person drinks, the worse the effects can be.
- Alcohol can have lasting effects on the brain, impairing how a person learns, thinks, and remembers.
- Alcohol can kill. When a person drinks too much alcohol in a very short period, alcohol poisoning can occur. Breathing gets difficult. A person can vomit, pass out, or even die.
- Some people become addicted to alcohol. They drink more and more as they get used to the alcohol. But they can stop and recover.

Remember: Just one drink can have serious effects.

Your age, your weight, your height, and your gender will all affect how you react to alcohol. For young people whose bodies are still developing, the effects of even a little alcohol can be worse than they are for older people.

