



AGED, BUT NOT TO PERFECTION!

Alcohol's Effect On Your Appearance

What's your largest organ? Is it your heart, lungs, or even your brain? It's none of the above. The largest organ on the human body is the skin. Do you really want to damage it by drinking? As previously mentioned, alcohol is a vasodilator. Not only does that mean it thins your blood, it also means it changes the way blood is distributed under your skin. That's why people who've been drinking can have red or blotchy cheeks. Alcohol also dehydrates your body and your skin, so that's why people who have been heavy drinkers look way older than they really are because of discoloration and wrinkles. In addition to bad skin, alcohol can also make you gain weight. Alcohol is very high in calories. The average beer has about 150 calories, and a fast food cheeseburger has about 300. So if you drink four beers, you've consumed about two cheeseburgers worth of calories.

SEXUAL HEALTH RISKS

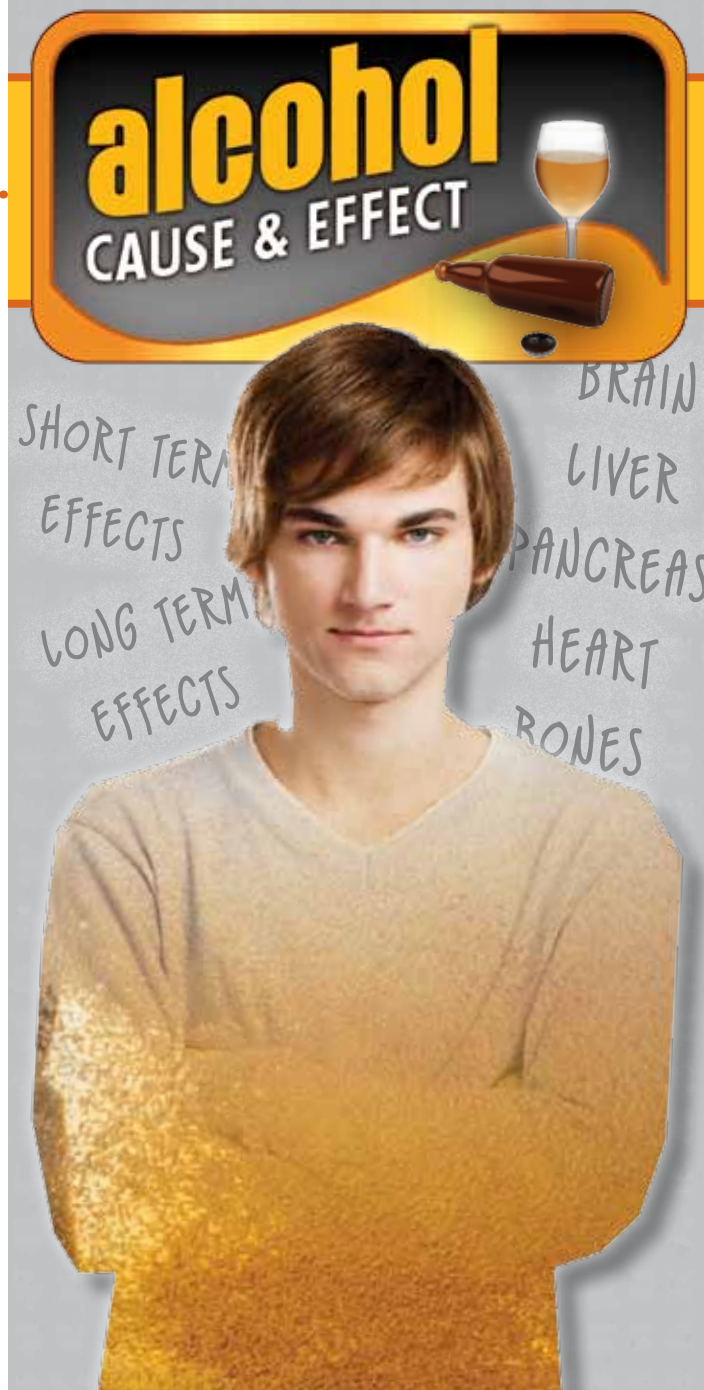
Alcohol can also cause major damage to your sexual reproduction organs. Men who abuse alcohol are more likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction, lowered hormone production and even infertility. Women can also experience infertility, as well as inconsistent menstruation cycles. Women, who drink while pregnant, even put their unborn babies at risk. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) include physical abnormalities, learning difficulties, emotional problems, and even death.

HOW DOES ALCOHOL AFFECT YOUR BODY?



Let's test your knowledge.

1. Arrhythmia is when your heart muscle stretches and droops.
a. True b. False
2. Your REM cycle occurs right after you fall asleep, and it's usually defined as a light sleep.
a. True b. False
3. Abusing alcohol can cause men and women to experience infertility?
a. True b. False
4. How long does it take alcohol to affect your brain?
a. 1 minute b. 90 seconds
c. 2 hours d. 90 minutes
5. What nutrient does alcohol prevent your bones from absorbing?
a. Calcium b. Vitamin D
c. Riboflavin d. Caffeine



ANSWERS: 1. b, 2. b, 3. a, 4. b, 5. a



Printed on 30% Post-Consumer Recycled Paper

CAUSE AND EFFECT

© 2017 PRIMO PREVENTION, LLC • PO Box 371 • Reserve, LA 70084
985-359-7848 • www.primoprevention.com • PSS-BR-CE1

ALCOHOL AND YOUR BODY



MIND FREAK

Alcohol and the Brain

Alcohol is classified as a depressant, but what does that even mean? Depressants slow down the processes of the central nervous system, which is a complex system of nerves that control the body. It only takes 90 seconds for alcohol to start affecting your brain, which is a main component of your central nervous system. Alcohol interferes with the way the brain communicates with the rest of the body, and it can even affect the way the brain looks and works. Because of these disruptions, many people experience lack of coordination or an inability to think clearly. Alcohol can also cause mood changes, or it can cause people to experience exaggerated feelings. This means that if they're already bummed out about something, alcohol can make them feel even more depressed.



Think alcohol stops affecting your brain even after you've decided to call it a night and get some shut eye? Think again! Alcohol may help you fall asleep faster because of its sedating effects, but it causes you to not sleep as well or as long. REM sleep is the stage of sleep that is usually associated with a deep sleep. Alcohol messes with your REM cycle, resulting in a lower quality rest. This is why people who drink alcohol may still wake up exhausted even if they thought they slept long enough.

Liver and Pancreas

Your liver is the organ most affected by alcohol because it's the organ that actually breaks down liquor. On average, it takes your liver an entire hour to break down one drink before it can be eliminated. Alcohol causes the liver to become slightly inflamed, but heavy drinking can cause steatosis (fatty liver), alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis, or cirrhosis. Alcohol also causes your pancreas to produce a toxic substance that can eventually lead to pancreatitis—a dangerous and painful inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels in the pancreas.

Heart

Your heart is also another organ that becomes susceptible after alcohol use. Alcohol is a vasodilator, which means it makes your blood thinner and affects your heart's ability to pump it throughout your body. Drinking over a long period of time or too much on a single occasion can damage your heart by causing the heart muscle to stretch and droop (cardiomyopathy) or by causing an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia). High blood pressure (hypertension) is also a potentially deadly side effect of alcohol use.

Bones

A special concern for teens in regards to alcohol use is how it affects your bones. Since alcohol disrupts the way bones can absorb calcium, young people who start drinking at a young age can have stunted growth and poor muscle development.



21 AND HAVING FUN, OR NOT!

Chelsea's Story

On the night she turned 21, Chelsea decided she would go out with her friends to a local bar. She had illegally consumed alcohol before, but always in moderation. She decided that for her 21st birthday, she would make it really special and get totally wasted with her friends. "I'm the birthday girl, so they'll just have to look out for me. I'm not driving tonight anyway." After the first few shots, Chelsea mistakenly believed alcohol wasn't having an effect on her, so she started chugging a couple of beers. She thought to herself, "liquor before beer; in the clear."

A little while later, when she finally stood up from their table to go to the restroom, the dizziness and lack of coordination set in. She began to see double, bumping past a group of guys. "Hey, birthday girl. You ok?" one of the guys asked. She mumbled and shook her head yes, and ran inside the restroom. Even though she hadn't eaten much that day, Chelsea started vomiting. The alcohol burned as it was coming back up, but Chelsea was too disoriented to even hold her own hair back. One of her friends barged in, almost screaming, "Hey Chels! Hurry up and finish puking. Those cute guys want to buy us all another drink." Chelsea wasn't worried about the cute guys. She was experiencing alcohol poisoning.

It was a good thing that one of her friends volunteered not to drink that night, because she was the only one that had the smarts to rush her to the hospital just in time to save Chelsea's life. This was NOT how Chelsea wanted to spend her 21st birthday.