

Alcohol and Your Health

Like a spider web, everything in life is connected

Weave a Healthy Lifestyle

Eat well following Canada's Food Guide.

Exercise at least 30 minutes daily.

Avoid tobacco smoke.

Limit alcohol use to two or fewer drinks per day.

Get your yearly flu immunization.

See your health practitioner regularly.

Take time to relax each day.

This pamphlet has been created by the Sudbury & District Health Unit in partnership with the Za-geh-do-win Information Clearinghouse.


Sudbury & District
Health Unit
Service de santé publique



Alcohol can catch you in its web

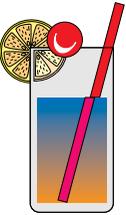


When you use alcohol, you are at risk for:

Facts about **Alcohol**

- Alcohol effects are immediate
- Alcohol is a drug
- Alcohol is a depressant
- Alcohol affects each person differently
- Alcohol affects the choices you make

1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol =

		
5 oz/142 ml of wine (12% alcohol)	1.5 oz/43 ml of spirits (40% alcohol)	12 oz/341 ml of regular strength beer (5% alcohol)

Physical Effects

Liver Damage

Long-term alcohol use can cause cirrhosis and other liver conditions.

Impaired Immune System

Alcohol reduces your ability to fight infections and this makes you more susceptible to colds.

Pancreatitis

Severe stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, jaundice (skin turns yellow) may be signs of pancreatitis. Diabetes can also develop from the use of alcohol.

Gout

A painful swelling of the joints in hands, wrists, feet and ankles that may flare up with alcohol use.

Impaired Thought Process

Memory loss, inability to think properly, mood changes and hallucinations are associated with alcohol use.

Stroke

Alcohol use increases your risk for high blood pressure and stroke.

Cancer

Risk for cancers of the mouth, stomach, and breast have been linked to alcohol use.

Sexual Dysfunction

Alcohol use may cause a loss of sexual desire in women and impotence in men. Infertility is possible in both men and women.

Social Effects

Injury

Using alcohol will increase your chances of injury. Alcohol can affect judgement, delay reaction time, impair attention span, and reduce coordination and the ability to problem solve.

Drinking & Driving

People who drink and drive put themselves and others at risk. Alcohol affects your ability to drive. If found guilty of drinking and driving you will lose your license for a year and you will have to pay a fine as well as pay for the ignition interlock device. Also, you will be required to take an education program at your own expense. Moreover, your insurance will increase dramatically.

Violence

Alcohol is a contributing factor in many acts of domestic abuse, child abuse (including incest), assaults, robberies, murders, and suicides. A sexual partner must be sober to consent to having sex. Having sex with a partner who is not sober can be considered sexual assault.

Unplanned Sex

When you drink, your decision-making abilities and judgement are impaired. This increases your willingness to take more risks. You may make choices or take actions that may cause further problems such as having unprotected sex. These behaviours put you at risk for an unplanned pregnancy, a sexually transmitted infection (including HIV/AIDS) and for a sexual assault.

FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) happens when alcohol crosses through the placenta and prevents a fetus from receiving enough oxygen and nutrients. When a pregnant mother drinks alcohol, her fetus is at risk for developing mental handicaps, developmental delays, learning disabilities, behavioural problems, bone and organ problems, and facial abnormalities. FASD lasts a lifetime. No amount of alcohol is considered safe when pregnant.

Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion. One of the main causes of binge drinking is peer pressure. Binge drinking may lead to alcohol poisoning, brain damage and even death.

Employment Issues

Substance abuse causes workplace problems due to the impairing effect of alcohol and other drugs and the lower productivity of chronic or dependent users. Impairment from alcohol or other drugs is a major cause of unemployment and absenteeism. Alcohol impairment causes a significant number of workplace accidents.[1]

[1]Substance Abuse in the Workplace: Highlights: Canadian Profile 1999, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.