



*** REMEMBER:** A person's experience with any drug can vary. There are a number of things that have an impact on a person's experience with a drug including but not limited to: the amount and strength of the drug they have taken, the setting in which the drug is used, a person's mood or expectations before using the drug as well as a person's past experience with that drug.

- Ethyl alcohol is the type of alcohol found in alcoholic beverages. It is a depressant drug produced naturally by fermentation of fruits, vegetables and grains but can also be made synthetically.
- One 12 ounce (340 ml) bottle of beer has the same amount of alcohol as one 5 oz glass of wine or 1.5 oz of spirits (whiskey, vodka, etc.)
- It takes approximately one to two hours for an adult liver to break down the alcohol in one standard drink. If a person drinks more, the alcohol accumulates in the blood and body tissues until it can be broken down. This results in a higher blood alcohol content and more intoxication. The more a person drinks the longer it will take for the alcohol to leave their body.

Short term effects may include:

- feelings of relaxation and drowsiness
- increased sociability
- lowered inhibitions (this means that a person is more likely to do things that they would not normally do)
- impaired judgement
- loss of coordination
- slurred speech
- blurred vision
- lowered blood pressure, breathing, pulse
- aggressiveness
- blackouts

Alcohol continued.....

Long term effects may include:

- skin problems
- vitamin deficiencies
- stomach ulcers
- sexual problems (decreased sperm production, impotency, infertility)
- intellectual impairment or memory loss
- liver damage
- heart and circulatory problems

Other Dangers:

- The more often a person drinks alcohol, the more likely they are to develop a tolerance to it. This means that more of the drug is needed to feel the effect. Regular users of alcohol may not appear to be drunk but are still not safe to perform tasks that require judgement such as driving.
- Alcohol is often not safe to use in combination with other drugs especially those that are also depressants. In some cases even a small amount of alcohol can change the effect of another drug (i.e. alcohol can reduce the effectiveness of drugs like antibiotics).
- Drinking large amounts of alcohol or drinking alcohol rapidly (chugging, drinking games, etc.) can lead to alcohol poisoning. Alcohol poisoning is an overdose of alcohol that results in vomiting, passing out and sometimes death.
- Some additional risks include injuries, accidents and unprotected sex.
- Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause permanent damage to the developing fetus.
- Alcohol can be both psychologically and physically addictive. Withdrawal symptoms can include aches, pains, elevated blood pressure, rapid pulse and breathing, nausea, vomiting, panic, seizures, hallucinations, depression and even death. The more severe withdrawal symptoms are more likely to occur after long periods of heavy drinking.

*** Is my use of alcohol a problem for me? If you are wondering whether your use of alcohol may be causing problems for you and would like to speak to an AFM Youth Counsellor you can call us at (204)944-6235 for more information.**