

# Alcohol

---

## ***Drinking and Driving***

It may surprise you that you don't need to drink very much alcohol to impair your driving abilities. The more alcohol you consume, the more your abilities will be impaired. Although most states set the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for adults who drive after drinking at 0.08 percent, impairment of driving skills begins at much lower levels.

Even though an alcohol-impaired driver's BAC may be under the limit, he/she is still dangerous. Alcohol lowers people's reaction times, making them less aware of the road around them, and less able to react if something was to happen. Drivers that have been drinking are a danger to themselves and to others.

## ***Interactions with Medication***

Alcohol interacts negatively with more than 150 medications. If you take an antihistamine for a cold or allergy and then drink alcohol, the alcohol will increase the drowsiness that the medication alone can cause making driving or operating machinery even more hazardous. In addition, if you are taking large doses of the painkiller acetaminophen and drinking alcohol, you risk serious liver damage. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before drinking any amount of alcohol if you are taking any over-the-counter or prescription medications

## ***Interpersonal Problems***

The more heavily you drink, the greater the potential for problems at home, at work, with friends, and even with strangers. These problems may include:

- Arguments with your spouse and other family members

- Strained relationships with coworkers
- Frequent absence from or lateness to work
- Loss of employment due to decreased productivity
- Committing or being the victim of violence.

## ***Alcohol-Related Birth Defects***

If you are a pregnant woman or one who is trying to conceive, you can prevent alcohol-related birth defects by not drinking alcohol during your pregnancy. Alcohol can cause a range of birth defects, the most serious being fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Children born with alcohol-related birth defects can have lifelong learning and behavior problems. Those born with FAS have physical abnormalities, mental impairment, and behavior problems. Because scientists do not know exactly how much alcohol it takes to cause alcohol-related birth defects, it is best not to drink any alcohol during this time.

## ***Long Term Health Problems***

- Alcohol related liver disease
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Pancreatitis

## ***Remember...***

Don't drink and drive. If you or someone you know has been drinking heavily, there is a risk of developing serious health problems. Because some of these health problems are both reversible and treatable, it is important to see your doctor for help. Your doctor will be able to advise you about both your health and your drinking.



