

Alcohol

What It Is

- **Names:** ethyl (beverage) alcohol, ethanol, booze, liquor, cocktails
- **Type:** central nervous system depressant
- **Forms:** clear absolute alcohol liquid diluted and/or blended as wine, beer, liquor (distilled spirits) or liqueur
- **Usage:** swallowed in drinks which may be blended or mixed with other spirits or nonalcoholic substances
- **Legal Status:** legal, regulated by various state laws for purchase eligibility and distribution location
- **Other Forms:** small amounts used in products such as mouthwash and cough medicine; non-beverage isopropyl and methyl alcohols

What It Feels Like

Initial relaxed and/or sociable feeling may be replaced with depression, anger, loss of control and drowsiness. Effects vary with individual.

What It Does

- **To Your Mind:** lowers ability of brain to control behavior and impairs your ability to perform motor skills such as driving
- **To Your Body:** lessens ability to move or speak effectively

Special Characteristics: Food or milk can help retard absorption. Food or drink does not change ongoing effects. One “shot” equals one glass of wine or beer. Effects vary by size of person related to blood absorption capacity, amount of food in stomach, built-up tolerance level and other factors. There’s no known cure for the next day “hangover,” however, water before bedtime may help lessen the effects.

How It Can Hurt You

- memory loss
- impotence
- liver, kidney, stomach and intestine damage
- susceptibility to alcohol-related diseases
- brain damage
- unborn children of using mothers may be affected by mental retardation, deformities, heart defects and delayed development
- addiction
- death from inability to breathe, heart failure, severe withdrawal effects, interaction with other drugs, driving while under the influence

When to Get Help

- Do you think you’re more witty and attractive when you drink?
- Do you think about how and when you’re going to drink again?
- Is your job performance affected by your drinking?
- Has your health changed?
- Are you spending more money on booze?
- Do family and friends mention your drinking to you?
- Do you stop and start drinking to test yourself?
- Are you a weekend binge drinker?
- Have you been stopped for drunk driving

Fact: It’s estimated that one in 20 Americans has an alcohol dependency problem. Of all the drugs in the world, alcohol and tobacco remain the top two killers.

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