

(B) Psychological Effects

Although alcohol initially makes you feel relaxed, long term excessive use can ultimately increase anxiety and cause depression. Alcohol can also affect your school work and family and social relationships. Studies have shown that students who drink alcohol to excess end up with poorer performance at school and take longer time to complete their degrees. Because alcohol lowers inhibitions and impairs judgment, risky and violent behavior can result. Moreover, friendship and romantic relationships can also be jeopardized. Alcohol can lead people to say or do things they might regret, like making a bad decision about having sex with someone.

Tips on drinking safely

- Eat a meal before your drink. Don't drink on an empty stomach.
- Sip your drink slowly or have non-alcoholic drinks between alcoholic ones
- Set yourself a limit of, for example 3 to 4 units (men) or 2 to 3 (women) for any one occasion.
- Buy beers and wines with lower alcohol content, and keep a supply of non-alcoholic drinks at home.
- Do something other than going to the pub and find other ways to relax.

Getting Help

Campus Resources

The Personal Counselling Service of Student Development Services helps students overcome their personal difficulties. Come to our office at 6/F, Amenities Building or call us at 2788 8478 during office hours.

Monday to Friday (08:50 – 17:30)

Saturday (09:00 – 12:00)

Community Resources (English & Cantonese Speaking)

Alcoholics Anonymous (a voluntary organization)

Telephone : 2522 5665 (English)

2578 9822 (Cantonese)

24-hour Help Line : 6621 1540

Website : <http://www.aa-hk.org/index.htm>

Castle Peak Hospital

Tuen Mun Alcohol Problems Clinic (TMAPC)

Telephone : 2456 8260 or page 7308 1108

Paging Service Hour :

Monday to Friday (09:00 – 19:00)

Saturday (09:00 – 14:00)

Website : <http://www.ha.org.hk/cph/eng/service/alcohol-txt.html>

Kwai Chung Hospital

Substance Abuse Assessment Unit

Hotline : 2959 8082

Website : <http://www.ha.org.hk/kch/eng/departments/depart-index.html>

Tung Wah Hospital

Substance Abuse Clinic

Hotline : 2884 9876

Website : <http://atp.tungwahcsd.org/>

ALCOHOL and YOU



There are many different reasons why people drink. Some drink because of peer pressure and to be part of a crowd. Some use alcohol to avoid difficult situations or uncomfortable feelings like anxiety or hurt. Anyone who drinks too much or too often runs the risk of developing an alcohol problem and the consequences can be very serious.

How much alcohol is too much?

Some drinks are stronger than others. The easiest way to work out how much we are drinking is to count "units" of alcohol. 1 unit is 10 grams of alcohol – the amount in a standard pub measure of spirits, a half pint of normal strength beer or lager, or a small glass of wine. Current UK guidelines recommend that the safe limit is 21 units for men and 14 units for women per week.

"Binge" drinking

How much you drink at one time is also important. These "safe limits" assume that our drinking is spread through the week.

In any one day, it is best for a man to drink no more than 4 units and for a woman to drink no more than 3 units. Drinking over 8 units in a day for men, or 6 units for women is known as "binge drinking".

You can drink above the safe limit on one night, but still remain within your "safe" limit for the week. There is some evidence that, even a couple of days of binge drinking, may start to kill off brain cells. This was previously thought only to happen with people who drank continuously for long periods of time.

How much am I drinking?

Most of us under-estimate the amount we drink. Keep a diary of how much we drink over the course of a week can give us a clearer idea of whether we are drinking too much. It can also help to highlight any risky situations – regular times, places and people when we seem to drink more.

How do I know if I have a drinking problem?

- Do you drink more often now than you used to and you need to drink more and more to feel good?
- Do you regularly use alcohol to escape from your problems?
- Is your drinking jeopardizing your academic performance and affecting your interpersonal relationships?
- Do you stop doing other things to spend more time drinking?
- Do you start to feel shaky and anxious the morning after drinking and getting hangovers regularly?

- When you drink, do you often get drunk even when you did not mean to drink to excess?
- Do you get into trouble with the law or injure yourself / others when you drink?
- Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking and felt that you should cut it down?

If a number of the items apply to you, or if you felt yourself getting defensive while answering these questions, it may indicate that a problem exists and that you may want to take a more detailed look at your drinking behavior.

What effects can alcohol have on me?

(A) Physical Effects

Alcohol goes directly into the bloodstream, overuse of alcohol can affect almost every system in the body.

Immediate effects :

- Loss of muscle control, impaired reflexes, vomiting, and unconsciousness.

Long - term effects :

- Cancer, brain damage, cirrhosis of the liver, weight gain, and birth defects if drinking while pregnant. Excessive drinking can also cause serious accidents, injuries, and death. A heavy drinking binge may even cause a life-threatening coma.