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HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™
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Alcohol

TCHATT

(Texas Child Health Through Telemedicine)



Alcohol

- Alcohol is a legal, controlled substance that lowers anxiety and inhibitions. This means that it is a drug that slows down brain activity. It can change person's mood, behavior, and self-control. It can cause problems with memory and thinking. Alcohol can also affect coordination and physical control. Alcohol is commonly consumed as a drink in various forms, including beer, wine and hard liquor.



How Does it Work?

- Alcohol is rapidly absorbed from the stomach and small intestine into the bloodstream. Then it crosses the blood-brain barrier and interacts with neurotransmitters in the central nervous system. There, the alcohol stimulates the delivery of “happiness chemicals” – serotonin and dopamine – to the brain and creates feelings of euphoria.
- In addition to feeling good, alcohol can make individuals feel dizzy for hours after it has been consumed. However, human body begin to metabolize alcohol instantly, which means that it takes approximately one hour to metabolize one standard drink (12 oz.) but some drinks take longer for the body to metabolize than others.



Alcohol Addiction

- Alcohol addiction also called alcoholism and alcohol dependence is a chronic disease characterized by uncontrolled drinking and preoccupation with alcohol.
- Alcoholism is the inability to control drinking due to both a physical and emotional dependence on alcohol.
- Symptoms include a strong need or urge to use alcohol, shaking, sweating, nausea, and vomiting. Those with alcohol use disorder may have problems controlling their drinking, continue to use alcohol even when it causes problems, or have withdrawal symptoms when they rapidly decrease or stop drinking.



Factors to Consider

- Alcohol's effects vary from person to person, depending on a variety of factors, including:
 - ✓ How much alcohol was consumed
 - ✓ How quickly they drank it
 - ✓ The amount of food they ate before drinking
 - ✓ Person's age
 - ✓ Person's sex
 - ✓ Physical condition
 - ✓ Medical and psychiatric history
 - ✓ Whether or not there a family history of alcohol problems



Effects of Alcohol

- Binge drinking raises risk of injuries, car crashes, and alcohol poisoning. It also puts people at risk of becoming violent or being the victim of violence.
- Heavy drinking over a long period of time may cause health problems such as development of alcohol use disorder; liver diseases, including cirrhosis and fatty liver disease (even in young individuals); heart diseases; increased risk for certain cancers; and increased risk of injuries.
- Heavy drinking can also cause school problems, social problems, legal problems, relationship problems, and cause suicidal ideations, desire for self-harm and harm to others.



Who should not drink

- Some people should not drink alcohol at all, including those who:
 - ✓ Are recovering from an alcohol use disorder (AUD) or are unable to control the amount they drink
 - ✓ Are under the legal drinking age 21
 - ✓ Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
 - ✓ Are taking medications that can interact with alcohol
 - ✓ Have medical conditions that get can worse if consume alcohol
 - ✓ Have psychiatric conditions that get can worse if consume alcohol
 - ✓ Are planning on driving
 - ✓ Will be operating machinery



Why Teens Use Alcohol?

- There is no single reason why teenagers use alcohol. But here are some of the core issues and influences behind the behavior of teenage alcohol use.
- ✓ **Peer pressure**
- ✓ **Media**
- ✓ **Self-medication and self-soothing**
- ✓ **Escape from reality**
- ✓ **Stress**
- ✓ **Boredom**
- ✓ **Lack of confidence and low self-esteem**
- ✓ **Rebellion**



Treatment

- Specialized programs: inpatient and outpatient
- Detox
- Medications
- Dietary supplements
- Self-care (changing life style)
- Substance abuse therapy
- Individual and family therapy
- Support groups (AA meetings)
- Family involvement



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Questions