

## How much is too much?

Many things affect how alcohol makes a person act and feel:

- Size, age and gender
- How fast a person drinks
- Having food in the stomach

Women, people who weigh less, or people who drink on an empty stomach react to alcohol more quickly. Young people are more affected by alcohol than older people.

Over time, alcohol can damage the liver, heart, nervous system and brain. Drinking too much at once can make a person seriously ill. It can even kill you.

## Alcohol and other drugs

Using alcohol with another drug can increase the effects of both drugs. Many deaths have resulted from mixing alcohol with illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine or heroin.

Using alcohol and legal drugs such as sleeping pills, tranquilizers, antidepressants, pain killers and cold and allergy medicines is also dangerous.

People respond differently to alcohol, so there's no way to know what amount is safe.

## Reduce your STD risk

The best choice is not to drink at all when you need to make important decisions.

### If you choose to drink, plan ahead

- **Know** how alcohol affects your feelings and judgment. Remember that drinking can change your opinion about what's safe and what's risky.
- **Talk with your partner** about STD risks when neither of you is drinking. Agree on a plan to protect yourselves from STD and stick with it.
- **Eat something** before you drink. Don't drink on an empty stomach.

### When you drink

- **Limit yourself** to no more than one drink per hour.
- **Don't let anyone talk you into drinking** more than you feel you can manage.
- **Don't have sex** with a new partner when you've been drinking.
- **Don't use needles** for any reason when you've been drinking.

## What's a drink?

These all have the same amount of alcohol:

- 12-ounce beer
- 10-ounce microbrew
- 4- to 5-ounce glass of wine
- 8- to 9-ounce malt liquor
- 1½-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor

### To learn more

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

1-301-443-3860 • [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

### CDC INFO

1-800-232-4636 • [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)

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# Drinking & STD

Alcohol can cause people to take risks they wouldn't usually take.



When these risks involve sex, it can result in sexually transmitted disease (STD).

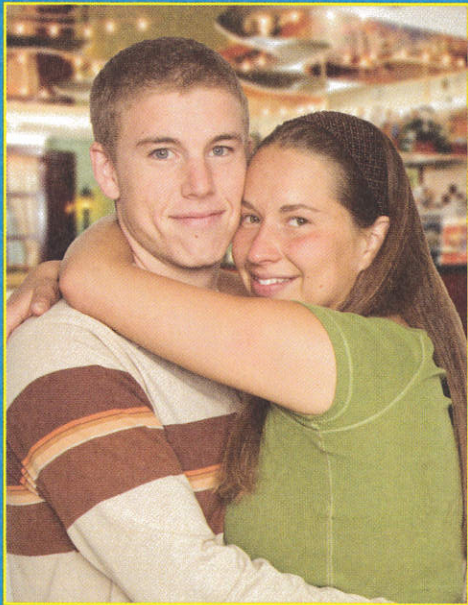




Drinking can cause you to take risks you wouldn't usually take. When these risks involve sex, it can result in an STD.

STD, or sexually transmitted disease, is passed from person to person during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

Drinking alcohol can make it harder to make decisions about sex and STD and stick to them.



"Being careful about drinking is one of the ways we stay safe."

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## What's the problem with drinking?

Alcohol affects feelings. Even one drink can make people more relaxed. Alcohol can also lower judgment and self-control.

### Avoiding STD

To avoid STD, you must:

- **Know the risks** of STD.
- **Talk to potential partners** about past sexual history and protection.
- **Decide** on the best way to protect yourself from STD and stick to your decision.
- **Be prepared** to resist pressure from a partner.

These things can be much more difficult if you've been drinking.

### Risks of STD

- Many people with an STD have no symptoms. But they can still pass the STD to a sexual partner. You can't tell by looking if someone has an STD.
- Two STDs—HIV and hepatitis B—can also be passed by sharing needles to inject drugs or steroids, for tattooing or body piercing, or for any other reason.
- Untreated STD can damage reproductive organs and other body parts. Babies born to mothers with STD can have birth defects.

### Talking with your partner

Talking with a possible sexual partner about past sexual history and about the best kinds of protection is important to avoid STD.

Drinking makes it harder to communicate well with a potential sexual partner.

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### Protecting yourself

There are several ways to protect yourself from STD.

- **Abstinence.** Not having sex (vaginal, anal or oral) is the best way to avoid getting an STD. People who are drinking may change their minds about being abstinent.
- **Having only one sexual partner.** This is also safe. Partners must not have an STD, have sex with anyone but you or share needles of any kind.
- **Condoms.** Latex condoms used correctly every time a couple has sex are highly effective protection against STD.  
  
Drinking can cause a couple to be careless so that the condom breaks or slips. Or they might have sex without using a condom.
- **Other drugs.** People who use alcohol are more likely to use other drugs. This increases the effects of both drugs.  
  
Sharing needles to inject drugs, or having sex with someone who shares needles, puts people at high risk of getting HIV or hepatitis B.

### Resisting pressure

A person who has been drinking is more likely to pressure someone into having sex, or to give in to pressure to have sex.

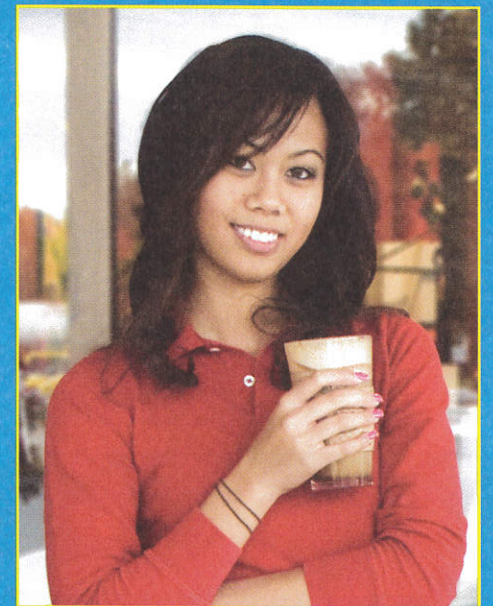
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## What happens when you drink?

Alcohol goes directly from your stomach into your bloodstream. It's quickly carried to your brain, liver and other major organs in your body.

Your liver helps your body get rid of the alcohol, but if you drink more than your liver can handle, alcohol builds up in your body. The more alcohol in your body, the more impaired you become.

Only time will sober a person up. Drinking strong coffee won't help. It takes about an hour for the liver of a healthy 150-pound man to get rid of one drink.



"I don't let anyone pressure me into drinking more than I know I can manage."

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