

# SIGNS OF ALCOHOL POISONING



## Critical Signs and Symptoms

- Mental confusion, stupor, coma, unable to rouse the person.
- Unconscious or semi-consciousness.
- No response to pinching the skin.
- Vomiting while sleeping or unresponsive.
- Slow respiration (breaths) of eight or less per minute or lapses between breaths of more than eight seconds.
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths).
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin. In the event of alcohol poisoning, these signs and symptoms will most likely be accompanied by a strong odor of alcohol. While these are obvious signs of alcohol poisoning, the list is certainly not all inclusive.
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness.

## Take Action

- Know the danger signals.
- Do not wait for all symptoms to be present.
- Be aware that a person who has passed out may die.
- If there is any suspicion of an alcohol overdose, call 911 for help. Don't try to guess the level of drunkenness.
- If you encounter a person who exhibits one or more of the signs and symptoms

**CALL 911.** Do what you would do in any medical emergency--call immediately.

## While Waiting for Help to Arrive

- While waiting for 911 emergency transport, gently turn the intoxicated person on his/her side and maintain that position by placing a pillow in the small of the person's back. This is important to prevent aspiration (choking) should the person vomit. Stay with the person until medical help arrives. If a person appears to be "sleeping it off" it is important to realize that even though a person may be semi-conscious, alcohol already in the stomach may continue to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. The person's life may still be in danger. If you are having difficulty in determining whether an individual is acutely intoxicated, contact a health professional immediately--you cannot afford to guess.

# As BAC Increases, So Does Impairment

