

Alcohol Abuse

Why do people drink?
What effect does alcohol have on me?
Am I abusing alcohol?
Do I run the risk of becoming an alcoholic?
How do I know if I have a drinking problem?

Being at University means having opportunities and choices. Among these are decisions regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. When encountering opportunities – at parties, on dates, in residence or in public places – remember that you have a choice and that you can make an informed decision.

The choices you make influence your academic performance, your personal development and your social life.

Using alcohol can influence your life negatively. You can run the danger of damaging your mental and physical health.

What does alcohol do?

Although drinking alcohol is a social past-time, it is a poison and kills brain cells. After drinking alcohol, your body sucks up vital fluids to relieve its effect from your organs. It then activates the adrenal glands to speed up your metabolism to remove this poison from your system. This causes the excitement you feel when being drunk. Alcohol dehydrates and poisons the body and can thus damage it. Hangovers are caused by toxins and dehydration.

Alcohol switches off nerve impulses to areas of the brain involved in memory, judgement and co-ordination.

The short-term effects

Short-term effects of drinking alcohol include distorted vision, hearing and co-ordination, it alters perceptions and emotions, it impairs judgement and memory.

Anyone who drinks runs the risk of developing a drinking problem.

The long-term effects

Long-term effects include loss of appetite, vitamin deficiency, stomach ailments, skin problems, sexual impotence, liver damage, heart and brain damage and impaired memory.

Drinking alcohol can bring on aggressive behaviour, it slows your reflexes and confuses your mind.

Drinking...? You might be depressed!

Legal?

Because alcohol is legal it is widely and often abused. There is very little education about the effects of alcohol. Alcohol should not be mixed with other drugs and should not be consumed when taking certain medication, when pregnant and while performing certain tasks.

Check List

You might wonder if you or someone you know has a problem with alcohol. The following list of questions will help you determine whether you should be worried.

- ⇒ Are you spending time recovering from the effects of alcohol?
- ⇒ Have you got a problem which has been caused or made worse through the use of alcohol?
- ⇒ Do you drink an increased amount of alcohol from when you first started?
- ⇒ Do you drink regularly? At every social event? Every weekend? Several times a week? Every day?
- ⇒ Can you stop after drinking a certain amount of alcohol?
- ⇒ Do you think about 'cutting back' but don't get around to doing it?
- ⇒ Do you have alcoholism or addiction in your family history?
- ⇒ Do you ever feel guilty or ashamed about your alcohol consumption?
- ⇒ Do you drink 5 or more drinks in a row on a regular basis?
- ⇒ Do you drink to get drunk?
- ⇒ Do you drink alone?
- ⇒ Did you do something under the influence of alcohol which you regret?
- ⇒ Have you ever experienced a black-out?
- ⇒ Have you missed lectures or deadlines due to the effects of alcohol?
- ⇒ Has your drinking harmed your relationships?

**Not coping?
Alcohol will make it worse!**

If you are worried about yourself or someone you know, if you want to ask questions or want to get further information please contact us:

Find us @:

**Student Wellness Services
28 Rhodes Avenue
Mowbray**

Telephone Numbers:

- **021 650 1017**
- **021 650 1020**

Hours:

Mon – Fri 08H30 – 16H30

- ☐ **be informed**
 - ☐ **know the dangers**
 - ☐ **make an informed choice!!**