



What You Should Know About Sex and Alcohol
- but were afraid to ask -

Alcohol is a depressant

Many people choose to drink alcohol. Some like the taste of certain drinks, others like to unwind or relax with a drink. Alcohol is typically available at on-campus parties, or other "social gatherings."

Drinking alcohol at social events does not signify a problem, but here are a few facts that you should know about alcohol when beginning a new relationship, meeting new friends, or continuing a romance:

- Prolonged drinking of alcohol alters male sexual behavior. The liver is stimulated and, in turn, produces a substance that steps up its destruction of the male sex hormone.
- Among the known damage that results from excessive, prolonged alcoholic intake, is withering away or atrophy of the testicles, enlargement of the breast in the male, loss of the male distribution of hair, and erectile dysfunction.
- The sex problems encountered by alcoholics (i.e., erectile dysfunction, atrophy of the testicles), is not a reaction only to chronic alcoholism. Anyone who drinks continuously can get the same effect. This is a pure effect of alcohol in any form you take it - whiskey, beer or wine. The total amount of alcohol content is the only thing that counts.
- In a recent study, which analyzed the effect of alcohol on social conversation of young adults, ages 21-30, it was found that after a few drinks they talk more and listen less. They interrupt their colleagues with their own statements and pay little attention to what others say. Alcohol does not really help you meet people.
- Many unwanted pregnancies occur when partners are too inebriated to use contraceptives responsibly.
- Heavy drinking during pregnancy can adversely affect offspring.
- When drinking, a desire for sexual activity may increase in both males and females, while performance is decreased. Sexual pleasure is more difficult to achieve after a few drinks.

Don't cheat yourself!

Sex is a wonderful and important part of life, but the fullest enjoyment of sexuality requires us to be clear thinking, responsible, and in control of the situation. Inappropriate use or abuse of alcohol may prevent us from making the best decisions and, consequently, rob us of a wonderful and important life experience.

Have you

- had regrets about sex "the morning after" because you drank "the night before"?
- suspected you might be pregnant - or actually become pregnant - because alcohol made you careless about contraception?
- become sexually involved with people you would not choose as partners if you had not been drinking?
- been unable to remember what happened "the night before"?
- been unable to perform sexually, or to enjoy sex, after drinking?

In these and other ways, alcohol can actually reduce or destroy our ability to experience the full pleasure of sex.

Can We Help? All Inquiries are Confidential

Alcohol and Other Drug Office (AODO)

For information or to make an appointment, call ----- 333-7557

Counseling Center

One-to-one counseling and referral for alcohol-related problems, call ----- 333-3704

Health Education Unit

For an appointment with the Sexuality Education Coordinator, call ----- 333-2714

For handouts and other materials

Health Resource Center at McKinley Health Center, call ----- 333-6000

Health Resource Center at the Illini Union, call ----- 244-5994

McKinley Health Center - (Dial-A-Nurse)

For an appointment for any health problem, related to or resulting from alcohol use, call: 333-2700.

Text reprinted with permission of Brown University, Department of Health Education.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>