

Women and Alcohol

High levels of daily use of alcohol or episodes of binge drinking are not healthy for women. Alcohol can increase the risk of health problems and cause severe problems for pregnant women.

Women

- get drunk faster than men
- become addicted more quickly
- develop diseases related to substance abuse sooner than men
- who were abused as a child, especially sexually abused, are at a higher risk for alcoholism
- can get intoxicated more rapidly than usual right before their period
- have less body fluid and more body fat; since alcohol is not fat soluble, the concentration of alcohol in a woman's blood will be higher than that of a man

If you're pregnant and you drink

- The risk of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is present.
- Your fetus risks mental retardation, impaired growth, facial malformations and organ defects.
- Your risk of stillbirth and miscarriage increases with even one or two drinks per week.

Breast cancer and alcohol relationships

- There is a 25% increase for risk of breast cancer with the intake of two drinks per day.
- A study by the National Cancer Institute showed that when pre-menopausal women drank about one ounce of alcohol daily (the average amount in two drinks), they had higher levels of estrogen.
- Estrogen is a powerful hormone that promotes cellular growth in breast and reproductive tissue.
- Higher levels of alcohol in blood and urine increase the risk of breast cancer because of the higher levels of estrogen present.

Alcohol not only affects the way your body functions, it is also connected with high-risk sexual activity, sexual assault and rape.

- 90% of acquaintance rapes involve alcohol.
- 73% of assailants and 55% of rape victims used alcohol or other drugs prior to the assault.
- 85% of unwanted sex/sexual assaults occurred when the women were intoxicated.
- Approximately 80% of college students drink and 50% are binge drinkers, (five drinks at a time for men, and four drinks at a time for women); 21% of women drinkers report binge drinking.
- Young adults who used alcohol were seven times more likely to have UNPROTECTED sex, which puts you at risk for pregnancy and STD's.
- Beware of "beer goggles." When you drink, your brain sleeps but your hormones stay awake! Don't do something you will regret the morning after.

If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who uses drugs or alcohol, or if you have questions about drugs or alcohol, contact the Alcohol and Other Drug Office (AODO) for information at 333-7557.

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>