Center Hill Community Affairs Division

Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol abuse is a serious concern. No matter the age of the offender, negative repercussions of alcohol abuse on the community, the family, and the offender can be long-lasting and ruinous. We hope this document helps you better understand both the causes as well as possible solutions to the problem of misusing alcohol.

Dealing with Alcohol

Anything taken out of moderation can be hazardous. Consuming alcohol is no exception to that rule. In fact, excessive drinking can be hazardous to the health of everyone involved, even those who remain sober. If you have ever dealt with the stressful situation of caring for, or worrying about, someone who is obviously drunk, you know it can be tough. Some people laugh at those who are drunk, thinking it funny when they pass out. Howver, there is nothing funny about asphyxiation or poisoning of the respiratory center in the brain, both of which can result in death. Ask yourself these questions:

Do you know about the dangers of alcohol poisoning?

Do you know when to seek professional help for a friend?

Are you aware of the long-term health consequences caused by excessive drinking when you are young?

Sadly, many college students wish they had soughe medical treatment for a friend. Many even feel responsible for alcohol-related trageties that could have been prevented. Don’t let those feelings haunt you for the rest of your life. Be proactive now.

What You Should Know

First, the myths about sobering up by drinking black coffee, taking a cold bath or shower, sleeping it off, or walking it off are just that—myths. They don’t work. The only thing that reverses overconsumption of alcohol is time. And if you are suffering from alcohol poisoning, you just don’t have time for it to wear off.

What Happens When You Get Alcohol Poisoning?

Alcohol actually depresses nerves that control such involuntary actions as breathing and the gag reflex (which prevents choking). If you have overdone it to the point of a fatal dose of alcohol, those functions may stop. What often makes a drunk person vomit is that alcohol is a stomach irritant. With the gag reflex stunted, there is a danger of choking, which could result in death (especially if the person is not conscious).

What about Blook Alcohol Concentration (BAC)?

Blood alcohol consumption is often associated with drunk driving. However, the more accurate term is alcohol-impaired driving, because you do not have to be drunk to be unable to function well. Judgment is often impaired long before evidence of any visible signs of drunkenness. Although most states recognize impaired driving at 0.08% or higher, signs actually exist at 0.05% or lower. And factors can affect some people differently from others:

How much alcohol you drink.

How heavy you are. Heavier people are less affected by the same amount of alcohol than lighter people, because they have more blood and water in their system in which to dilute the alcohol.

How fast you drink. The quicker you drink, the higher your BAC. The liver can only rid the body of approximately one drink per hour. If you drink more than that, the remainder circulates in the bloodstream.

How much food is in the stomach. Food will help the body absorb more slowly into the bloodstream. When there is no food in the stomach, alcohol is more quickly absorbed, causing a spike in BAC.

What you drink. The stronger the drink, the more quickly yit is absorbed. That is why hard liquor is more devastating in a short amount of time than is wine or beer.

How warm the drink is. Warm alcohol is absorbed more quickly than cold alcohol.

What your gender is. Women reach a high BAC more quickly than most men because they have less water in their bodies.

Blood Alcohol Chart

Although factors can cause BAC to vary, the following gives a general idea of how BAC is affected. You can see how quickly the BAC can reach unacceptable levels.

Consider the following steps in overcoming any alcohol dependence:

Commit to stop drinking.

Set goals and prepare for change.

Get sober safely.

Find new meaning in life.

Plan for triggers and craving.

Get support.