

Alcohol Poisoning / Alcohol Overdose (AOD)

Alcohol poisoning is a serious — and sometimes deadly — consequence of consuming large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time.

Signs of Alcohol Poisoning:

- ✓ Person cannot be roused / unconscious
- ✓ Person appears confused or in a stupor
- ✓ No response to pinching the skin
- ✓ Vomiting while sleeping
- ✓ Seizures
- ✓ Slow breathing (fewer than 8 breaths per minute)
- ✓ Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- ✓ Low body temperature (hypothermia), bluish skin color, paleness

***Don't be afraid
to call 911.***

Don't wait for all of these symptoms to be present before you seek help.

***A person who is unconscious or
can't be awakened is at risk of dying.***

What Can Happen:

- ✓ Victim chokes on own vomit
- ✓ Breathing slows, becomes irregular, stops
- ✓ Heart beats irregularly or stops
- ✓ Hypothermia (low body temperature) leads to cardiac arrest
- ✓ Hypoglycemia (too little blood sugar) leads to seizures
- ✓ Untreated severe dehydration from vomiting can cause seizures, permanent brain damage, or death.

Who Has Increased Risk?

Youth – more likely to binge drink; don't know how much is too much

Female – alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

Small Height/Weight - alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

Empty Stomach - alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

Poor Health – more vulnerable to damaging effects of alcohol

Drug Use / Medication – mixing drugs and alcohol increases the risk of overdose



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Drinking too much too quickly can affect your breathing, heart rate and gag reflex and potentially lead to coma and death.

Even after a person stops drinking, the heart keeps beating, and alcohol in the stomach continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body, depressing the nerve system even more.

Don't leave an unconscious person alone.

The only thing that reverses the effects of alcohol is time.

Nothing else will sober you up -- drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, sleeping it off, or walking it off. None of these will help.

If you suspect that someone may have ingested a fatal dose of alcohol, help is required immediately:

- ✓ Call 911 and stay with the victim.
- ✓ Keep the victim from choking on vomit.
- ✓ Tell medical personnel the symptoms and, if you know, how much alcohol the victim drank. Prompt action may save the life of a friend, or your own.

Bystanders (friends, parents, strangers) have a responsibility:

- ✓ 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 AOD, call 911. Don't try to guess the level of drunkenness.

Sources / Resources:

<http://www.gordie.org/home.aspx>

<http://www.brad21.org>

<http://www.withcarson.com>

<http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov>

<http://www.hazingprevention.org/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/alcohol-poisoning/DS00861>

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/SafeSobr/15qp/web/idalc.html>

***Don't hesitate.
Be safe, not sorry.***

