



YOUR

GUIDE

to dealing with

alcohol

# DRINKING

**One or two drinks can make you feel relaxed and confident.**

But if you drink too much it could be a different story. You could end up slumped on the floor, fighting, vomiting, miserable or just plain boring.


Know your limits and you'll have a much better time.

Many young people choose not to drink. They know you don't have to drink to have a good night out, even though it may seem like that's what everyone does.

If you are under 18 it is illegal to drink or buy alcohol in pubs or clubs or take it away. If you get caught, you could face a fine of up to \$2,200.\*

\*Effective from 1 July 2008

**Know your limits and you'll have a much better time.**



"You do dumb things when you're maffgotted, ending up in trouble with the police, looking like an idiot in front of the girl you're trying to impress."  
Steve, 18

**If you drink alcohol**

# TIPS FOR HAVING A GOOD TIME

## Before

- Have something to eat.
- Leave the car behind.
- If someone does plan to take the car, nominate a non-drinker to drive.
- Make sure you have enough money for a cab fare home – just in case you're left stranded.
- Set a limit on how many drinks you'll have before you start and stick to it.

## During

- Drink water or soft drinks between alcoholic drinks.
- Avoid straight spirits, shots and cocktails.
- Avoid rounds or shouts (you can end up drinking more than you'd planned).
- Avoid mixing your drinks (if you start on beer stick to it).
- Eat something (but avoid salty snacks that make you thirsty).
- Watch your drink – drink spiking includes double shots and happens mostly in homes or at parties by someone you know.
- Dance or move around.
- If you leave, tell your mates where you're going and who with.
- Look after your mates and never leave a drunk mate on their own.

## After

- Never drive if you've been drinking.
- Never accept a ride from someone who has been drinking – catch a cab or stay with friends instead.
- Drink plenty of water. This will lessen the effects of a hangover.
- Hang out with people who will look after you if you get into trouble.

**If you are under 18 and drink alcohol in a public place without your parent or guardian you are breaking the law.**

# WHAT CAN IT DO TO YOU



**Alcohol is a depressant drug, which means it will relax you, rather than stimulate or excite you.**

## **When you drink you:**

- lose your ability to handle complex problems.
- are more likely to take risks.
- have trouble doing more than one thing at a time.
- are more likely to make bad decisions.
- no longer have precise control over your muscles.
- lose your ability to react quickly.

*"On Saturday night when everyone is shitfaced, fights happen a lot and I don't really like that."*

*Peta, 17*



# LOOKING OUT FOR YOURSELF

## How do you know if you've had too much?

How much is too much varies from person to person.

If you go slowly and limit the amount of alcohol you drink you'll have more control over the kind of night you'll have.

If you hit it too fast you may not know you've had too much until you fall over, do something dangerous or something embarrassing like pissing yourself.

**If you are pregnant, it's best not to drink at all. Drinking a lot during pregnancy can harm the baby.**

## Why do guys get to drink more?

The average man is able to drink more than the average woman because they have higher water content in their bodies. This means the same amount of alcohol will be more concentrated in a woman's body and more likely to cause harm.

## How come you feel smashed, but your mates look fine?

How quickly someone gets out of it depends on a number of things – a person's size, gender, weight, fitness level and what they've eaten.

Alcohol doesn't suit some people at all. They often end up in fights, in tears, sick or just really depressed.

If you have had a bad experience with a certain type of drink, it is likely to happen again. Avoid that drink next time.

# WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU MIX ALCOHOL with other drugs?

**Mixing alcohol with drugs – whether illegal, over-the-counter or prescription – can be dangerous and unpredictable.**

Alcohol can also stop medicines from working properly and can make the negative effects of the drug worse.

**Mixing alcohol with other depressant drugs (eg. cannabis, methadone, heroin or minor tranquillisers) can cause your body's reactions to slow down and increase the likelihood of coma or death.**

If you combine stimulants (eg. ecstasy, speed, ice or cocaine) with alcohol the effects of the alcohol may be hidden by the effects of that stimulant. You may feel less drunk than you really are, take more risks, and put yourself or your mates in danger.

*"Shit, I had some e's and was drinking beers with my mates and the next thing I remember was waking up on the street and my wallet and mobile were gone."*

Steven, 18

# TRUE <sup>or</sup> FALSE

## TRUE

- Eating slows the absorption of alcohol into your body.
- Alcohol can stay in your system well into the next day - so you could still be over the limit if you drive somewhere after you wake up.
- You can overdose on alcohol.

## FALSE

- Feeding bread to a drunk person will sober them up.
- Coffee, vomiting or a cold shower speeds up the time it takes to remove alcohol from your body.
- A headache tablet will make your hangover go away.

# LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR MATES

**Sure, it can be fun watching your mates act like idiots after a few drinks... but what happens if things go wrong?**

You know... a fight starts and someone gets hurt, or someone collapses and you can't revive them. There could be a time during the night when you'll need to say: 'Mate, you've had enough'. By being there for your mates you can help make the night a good one for everyone.

## Spiking drinks isn't funny

When a person secretly puts alcohol or other stuff into another person's drink - it's not only dangerous, it's illegal.

This includes giving them double shots or oversized drinks.

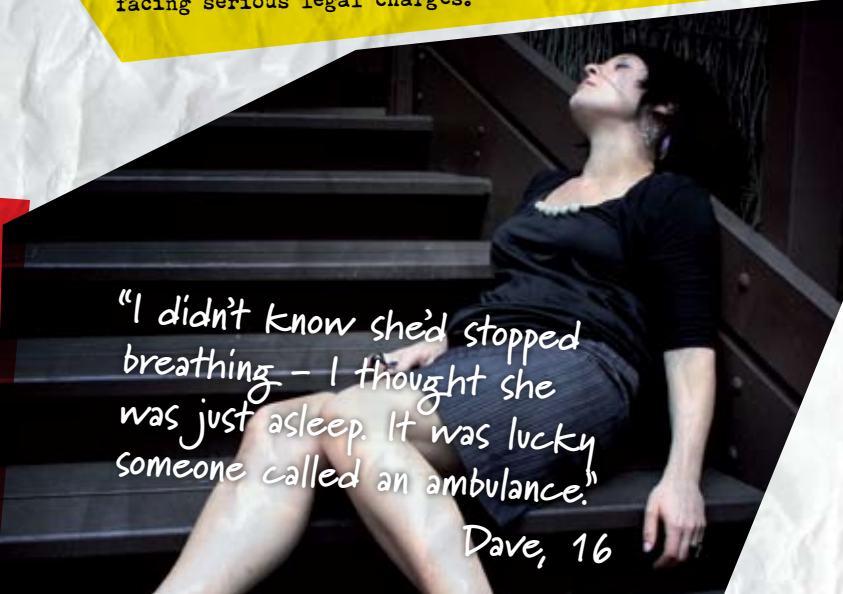
It might seem funny at the time, but it can have major consequences - causing that person to feel sick, faint or even die.

## Taking advantage of someone that's drunk

When you're smashed you can feel confident, even invincible. Suddenly that girl or guy you have the hots for seems to be 'available'. Don't count on it!

Just because they seem relaxed doesn't mean they are interested. Never force yourself onto anyone.

If you take advantage of someone when they are drunk, you can end up making a dick of yourself. You could also be facing serious legal charges.



"I didn't know she'd stopped breathing - I thought she was just asleep. It was lucky someone called an ambulance."

Dave, 16

# When is too much dangerous?

If you see any one of the following seek medical help immediately:

- a person is unconscious and pinching, poking or shouting at them won't wake them up
- their skin is cold, clammy, pale or bluish/purplish (this means they are not getting enough oxygen)
- they are vomiting, but not waking up
- they are breathing very slowly (if there's more than 10 seconds between each breath it's life threatening)

## How can you help?

**Call 000 immediately (112 for mobiles) and stay with them until the ambos arrive.**

Ambos are there to help, not do. They could save your friend's life.

While you're waiting, roll the person onto their side and open their mouth to clear away any fluid or vomit. If the person is not breathing and you know CPR begin immediately.

If the situation is less serious, give them some water, help them into a cab or, if you are sober, drive or walk them home.

## IS YOUR DRINKING becoming a problem?

When you drink alcohol on a regular basis sometimes it's difficult to know whether you are actually drinking too much.

If over time you find you need to drink more to get the same effect, you could have a drinking problem.

Some tell tale signs are:

- getting into hassles at school, work or home
- feeling hungover in the morning
- thinking about alcohol a lot during the day
- feeling edgy
- sweating, shaking, vomiting or feeling anxious and depressed when you don't drink

If these symptoms sound familiar, or you are drinking because you're stressed, depressed or to escape from your life, talk to someone about it - a mate, family member, doctor or counsellor.

**Rather than solving problems, drinking alcohol can make them worse.**

If you think you have a problem, or just want to talk to someone, who should you contact?

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) offers a free, completely private telephone counselling service 24 hours a day.

**Phone 1800 422 599 (toll free)**

**or (02) 9361 8000.**

**If you need an interpreter call**

**13 14 50.**



# USEFUL

# WEB LINKS

**[www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)**

Information and support for young people on issues including depression, drugs and alcohol, family issues, friends and relationships.

**[www.somazone.com.au](http://www.somazone.com.au)**

Clear, unbiased, non-judgmental answers to questions you may have about alcohol, drugs, sex, mental health issues, harassment/abuse, relationships and more.

**[www.thecoolspot.gov](http://www.thecoolspot.gov)**

A young teen's site featuring information on alcohol and tips on how to resist peer pressure.

**[www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au)**

Information about drugs and alcohol.

**NSW HEALTH**