

## Alcohol's Effects

A number of factors determine the effect alcohol has on individuals - why different people consuming the same amount react differently or why the same person can have different reactions on different occasions.

**Speed of Drinking** - The more rapidly the beverage is ingested, the higher the peak blood alcohol concentration (BAC). The liver metabolizes about 1/2 ounce of alcohol per hour.

**Presence of Food in the Stomach** - Eating while drinking slows down the absorption rate. When alcoholic beverages are taken with a substantial meal, peak BAC may be reduced by as much as 50%.

**Body Weight** - The larger person has more blood and requires greater amounts of alcohol to reach a given BAC.

**Drinking History/Tolerance** - Increasing amounts of alcohol are needed to result in the physical and behavioral reactions formerly produced at lesser concentrations, if there is a long history of drinking.

**Environment** - There may be differences in alcohol's effects, depending upon where one drinks (e.g., local bar, with family, hostile environment, etc.).

**The Drinker's Expectations** - Many people become intoxicated on less alcohol merely because they have that expectation before they begin drinking.

**General State of Emotional and Physical Health** - Many people seem more susceptible to the effects of alcohol when they are extremely fatigued, have recently been ill, or are under emotional stress and strain. The usual amount of alcohol may result in uncomfortable effects.

**Sex Differences** - Given the same amount of alcohol and proportional body weight, females will generally have a higher BAC than their male counterparts, due to less body fluid to dilute the alcohol and more body fat.

Females are generally more affected by alcohol just prior to menstruation. Females taking birth control pills or medications containing estrogen may remain intoxicated longer than those who do not, due to the liver's function of metabolizing both.

**Other Drugs** - Prescription, over-the-counter, illicit and unrecognized drugs all have potential reactions with alcohol. One should be aware of the additive and synergistic effects when these drugs are mixed with alcohol.

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If you would like to consider **Personal Counseling** please contact:

Annamaria Silveri, PhD (313) 993-1459

Rachel Bennett, LMSW (313) 993-1170

If you would like to make an appointment with the **Health Clinic** please contact:

Olga Parfenov, FNP-BC (313) 993-1185

In case of **Emergency** contact:

UDM Public Safety (313) 993-1123 or 911

or

Henry Ford Hospital Emergency Room – 2799 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202