



THE PREVENTION POST

from Centennial Mental Health Center's Prevention Team

Alcohol Awareness IMPACT

Immune System

Chronic alcohol use reduces the ability of white blood cells to effectively fight off harmful bacteria, disrupts production of cytokines and suppresses the development of T-Cells.

Bones

Alcohol acts as a diuretic, flushing calcium from healthy bones. Heavy drinking can accelerate the rate of bone deterioration and increase the risk for bone fracture and osteoporosis.

Weight

Not only does alcohol contain empty calories with no nutritional value, it can impair the body's ability to absorb nutrients and vitamins from food. By slowing down metabolic function, heavy alcohol consumption can contribute to weight gain.

Stomach

The short-term effects of alcohol on your stomach include sickness, nausea and diarrhea. In the long-term, however, alcohol irritates and inflames the stomach lining, which can lead to stomach ulcers and bleeding. Severe tearing in the stomach may also lead to anemia.

Alcohol is known as a depressant, meaning it slows down the brain's communication pathways. This disruption can change mood and behavior, making it harder to think clearly and move with coordination. Alcohol abuse can also lead to learning and memory problems, as well as depression and anxiety.

Brain

Heart

Heavy drinking, especially binge drinking, is a known cause of cardiomyopathy (stretching and drooping of heart muscles), arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat), stroke and high blood pressure.

Liver

The liver metabolizes, or breaks down, alcohol and other harmful substances. Persistent drinking can lead to develop diseases, such as liver inflammation or severe liver scarring. In fact, more than 2 million Americans suffer from alcohol-related liver disease.

Central Nervous System

Slurred speech, blurred vision, decreased reaction time and impaired memory are all short-term effects of alcohol on the central nervous system. When alcohol is consumed heavily over time, it can cause permanent cell damage in the form of neuropathy.

Neuropathy alternates feelings of weakness, burning, pain and numbness of the hands and feet.

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and causes both temporary and permanent brain injury.



TRYING TO CONNECT WITH A LOVED ONE IMPACTED BY ALCOHOL?



Communication Pointers

Use questions and comments that encourage further discussion

Give your full attention to the person talking

Allow others to complete their statements before you respond

Focus on listening before drawing a conclusion

Rephrase what you have heard and check for mutual understanding before continuing

Set up ground rules before starting a conversation about a sensitive subject