

# FACTS ABOUT DRUGS

# ALCOHOL

## WHAT IT IS

**Names:** Ethyl (beverage) alcohol, ethanol, booze.

**Type:** Central nervous system depressant.

**Forms:** Clear absolute alcohol liquid diluted and/or blended as wine, beer, liquor (distilled spirits) or liqueur.

**Usage:** Swallowed in drinks which may be blended or mixed with other spirits or non-alcoholic substances.

**Legal Status:** Legal, regulated by various state laws for purchase eligibility and distribution location.

**Other Forms:** Small amounts used in products such as mouthwash and cough medicine. Nonbeverage isopropyl and methyl alcohols are "alley juice" drinks for street alcoholics and teenagers.

## WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

Initial relaxed and/or sociable feeling may be replaced with depression, anger, loss of control, and drowsiness. Effects vary with individual.

## WHAT IT DOES

**To Your Mind:** Lowers ability of brain to control behavior and impairs your ability to perform motor skills such as driving.

**To Your Body:** Lessens ability to move or speak effectively.

**Special Characteristics:** Milk can retard absorption. Food or drink does not change ongoing effects. One "shot" equals one glass of wine or beer.

Effects vary by size of person related to blood absorption capacity, amount of food in stomach, built up tolerance level and other factors. There is no known cure for the next day withdrawal "hangover."

## HOW IT CAN HURT YOU

**Memory Loss:** Hypothermia. Decreased sex drive, impotence, menstrual problems, liver and kidney damage. General stomach and intestine damage. Lack of ability to feel pain, coma, susceptibility to alcohol related diseases, anxiety, insomnia, socially unacceptable behavior. Brain damage, affected walk. Depletion of vitamins and nutrients.

Death from inability to breathe, heart failure, severe withdrawal effects, interaction with other drugs, driving while under the influence, suicide. Aspiration of vomit leading to asphyxiation or pneumonia is not uncommon.

Dependence can be both emotional and physical.

Unborn children of drinking mothers may be affected by mental retardation, deformities and heart defects.

## WHEN TO GET HELP

- Do you think you're more witty and attractive when you drink?
- Do you think about how and when you're going to drink again?
- Is your job performance affected by your drinking?
- Has your health changed?
- Are you spending more money on booze?
- Do you stop and start drinking to test yourself?
- Are you a weekend binge drinker?
- Have you been stopped for drunk driving?

One "yes" and your common sense is all it takes to know it's time to get smart about alcohol and the rest of your life.

**NEW VISION™**

**1-800-939-CARE OR (816) 276-3303**

**Research Medical Center**

**2316 East Meyer Boulevard ♦ Kansas City ♦ MO ♦ 64132**