

alcohol...

*Virginians' favorite drug
and most common killer.*



Lifesaving Tips

- * Arrange ahead of time for a designated driver, someone who is responsible for driving you home and not drinking.
- * Make alcohol an accompaniment to social activities, not the main focus.
- * Be a responsible host. Serve food and have non-alcoholic drinks available at parties and social gatherings. Don't let your guests drive after drinking alcohol and NEVER serve to someone under the age of 21.
- * Space out your drinks (one hour per drink before driving). Resist pressure from others urging you to drink.
- * Never ride in a car with someone who has been drinking. Call a cab or ask a friend to drive you home.
- * Your best defense against a drunk driver is to wear your safety belt and properly secure children in child safety seats.



Various beers, wines and liquors have differing percentages of alcohol. You will want to know the facts about the drinks you consume.

alcohol...

Did you know every 30 minutes a person dies in an alcohol-related car crash?

So why is Alcohol Virginians' drug of choice?

It's easy to get. It's legal.

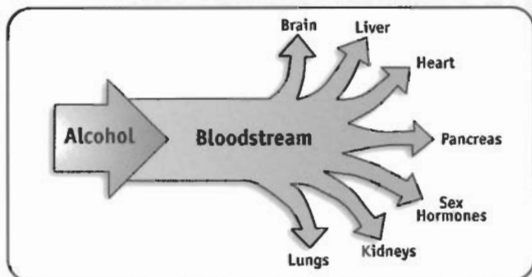
It's socially acceptable.

Alcohol – including beer, wine and hard liquor – is not only the most commonly used and widely abused psychoactive drug in Virginia, but also in the country.

Adults drink for many reasons, but some of the most popular are:

- * to complement the ambiance of a meal;
- * to accompany religious ceremonies;
- * to enjoy the taste;
- * to escape and relax, and
- * to be social.

Keep in mind that nearly half of Virginia's highway fatalities involve alcohol.



How Alcohol Affects Your Body

Immediate

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. It is absorbed directly into the bloodstream, and heads straight for your brain. As alcohol enters the bloodstream, it slowly impairs judgment and the ability to make decisions, reducing inhibitions and giving a false feeling of self confidence. It is a drug that blocks messages going to your brain and alters your perceptions, emotions, vision, hearing and coordination. Since all of these abilities are imperative in operating a motor vehicle and since even moderate amounts of alcohol impair these abilities, drivers should NEVER drink and drinkers should NEVER drive.

Long-term

Alcohol affects virtually every organ in the body and chronic use can lead to numerous preventable diseases. Heavy drinking can eventually cause cirrhosis and cancer of the liver. Alcohol abuse can lead to both homicides and suicides. Other long-term effects include loss of appetite, vitamin deficiencies, stomach ailments, sexual impotence, liver damage, heart and central nervous system damage and memory loss.

Alcohol and its Effects on Society

Nationwide, approximately one million people are involved in alcohol-related incidents. Alcohol involvement is the single greatest factor in motor vehicle accidents. Alcohol is a leading cause of all murders, accidental deaths, suicides, and other crimes.

What about cost? Alcohol-related crashes cost society billions of dollars. Each alcohol-related fatality costs about \$950,000. Each

Virginians' favorite drug



Legal Consequences of Drinking and Driving

If you are convicted of driving under the influence (DUI), you could lose your driver's license, incur heavy fines or go to prison. If you kill or injure someone because you were drinking and driving, you will not only pay the legal consequences, but you will also pay emotionally the rest of your life. It's something you will never forget.

In Virginia, you can be convicted of DUI with a .08% or greater blood alcohol concentration (BAC) without further evidence. However, drivers arrested with a BAC below .08% may still be convicted with proof of impairment. You could also be required to take a blood test to see if you are driving under the influence of over-the-counter, prescription or illegal drugs. If you refuse a blood or breath test, your license could be suspended.

Injured in alcohol-related crashes annually. Alcohol is a leading cause of vehicle deaths and injuries and is a factor in one-half of all violent crimes.

The cost to society more than \$45 billion every year. Just one alcohol-related injury averages about \$20,000.

Prevention

Responsible decision-making can reduce your chances of being another fatal statistic in an alcohol-related crash. Of course the best and safest policy is to "NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE." Unfortunately millions of Americans still ignore this advice. So make sure you protect yourself and others when you do drink alcohol.

Examine your physical and emotional condition. If you are stressed, tired, or taking medication, the effects of alcohol will be more intense. Avoid mixing alcohol with any other drug. The outcome could be extremely dangerous.

Drink on a full stomach. Eat before and while you drink to slow the absorption of alcohol into your system. Foods (especially fatty foods) delay absorption. High protein foods like cheese and meats also work well. They stay in the stomach longer.

Sip slowly. You should wait one hour per drink before driving. Drinking slowly and limiting drinks can help you avoid alcohol build-up and its unpleasant effects. A cold shower or black coffee won't make you sober, it will only make you a wide-awake drunk.

Choose your beverage wisely. Drinks that contain more than one liquor often have a more intoxicating effect. Remember, 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine and one and one-half ounces of whiskey all contain the same amount of alcohol. Keep track of your drinks. Use water as a mixer to help slow the absorption rate. Carbonated beverages speed up the emptying of alcohol into the small intestine, where it is absorbed more quickly into the bloodstream.

Drugs & Driving

Virginia's laws prohibit anyone from driving under the influence of any drug, including alcohol, prescription or non-prescription medications, or illegal drugs.

A drug is ANY chemical substance, natural or synthetic which can impair the ability of a person to operate a motor vehicle.

State laboratories test for seven categories of drugs other than alcohol:

Depressants slow down the brain and other parts of the central nervous system (valium, alcohol, barbiturates, sedatives, etc...).

Stimulants overstimulate or "speed up" the brain and other parts of the central nervous system (cocaine, caffeine, speed, crank, diet pills, etc...).

Hallucinogens impair a user's ability to see the world as it really is (LSD, peyote, mescaline, etc...).

Narcotic Analgesics relieve pain and can cause addiction (codeine, heroin, opium, morphine, percodan, etc...).

Cannabis is a plant that causes an intoxicating effect (marijuana and hashish).

Inhalants produce volatile fumes that produce significant impairment when abused (glue, gas, paint thinner, nitrous oxide, etc...).

Phencyclidine (PCP) was originally developed for use as an anesthetic. It is a powerful drug that acts as a depressant, stimulant or hallucinogen.



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