

## **ALCOHOL ABUSE**

Most of you know what alcohol looks like, how it is packaged, and how it makes you feel. Perhaps something you didn't know is that alcohol is a drug. Its scientific name is ethyl alcohol and it is classified as a depressant, the same drug class as a barbiturate or tranquilizer. Alcohol is unique because it is legal for adults to buy and drink and is widely accepted in our culture. In fact, alcohol is the most popular drug among youth and adults in our country.

Sadly, alcohol is also one of the most deadly drugs available to our youth today. The leading cause of death among teens in this country is alcohol-related traffic accidents. Alcohol also causes heart disease, high blood pressure, liver damage, brain damage, and many other health problems.

Once alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream, it acts upon the central nervous system like a depressant, affecting speech, vision, and coordination. The physical effects of alcohol depend on many factors, including the amount of alcohol consumed over time, the emotional state and body weight of the drinker, the concentration of the drink, and the amount of food in the stomach at the time of consumption.

Smaller doses of alcohol may cause euphoria and a mild relaxed feeling. Intoxication occurs when higher doses are taken. Responses to higher doses of alcohol are varied: it may make some people feel more outgoing and giddy, while others will feel depressed, aggressive, or hostile. Physical responses to increased doses of alcohol include altered perception, impaired judgment, loss of coordination, staggered walk, blurred vision, bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. An overdose of alcohol can cause unconsciousness, respiratory failure, and death.

Alcohol is an addictive drug. The medical term for this addiction is called alcoholism. Research suggests that alcoholism may be a genetic predisposition, and that a child of an alcoholic parent runs many times the

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Research gathered from websites and other resource are synonymous to Jamaica and other countries  
World Wide.

risk of becoming an alcoholic. Alcoholism strikes all age groups; about ten percent of the population will develop the disease.

For more information on this article visit

<http://www.drug-addiction.net/alcohol.htm>