

The greatest thing you can ever do in the name of friendship...

Alcohol poisoning happens on university campuses across the country. Some students are drinking heavily and quickly becoming medical emergencies, or worse - fatalities. Campuses are doing what they can to educate students and prevent tragedy, but sometimes it comes down to friendship.

Imagine a friend is in a state where he or she cannot take care of themselves and cannot make decisions. You may have to take action that could be critical to your friend's condition.

If you are ever in an emergency, don't be afraid to get help from others - residence life staff, campus safety, a hospital - so you don't have to make decisions alone.



The Bacchus Maneuver: Make sure an intoxicated person is turned to their side so their airway isn't blocked and they will not choke.

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or cu_healthy@carleton.ca.



2600 CTTC Building
613-520-6674
carleton.ca/health

Alcohol Poisoning



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MYTH #1:

“Nothing like this could ever happen to me or my friends”

Although the majority of university students make positive choices about drinking, the number of cases of alcohol poisoning has risen.



Many students have had to get their stomachs pumped at hospitals because they have drunk too much alcohol.

You hear the stories about people getting drunk on campus. You might do this yourself. On any given weekend, someone you know could cross the line between having too much to drink and a crisis - acute alcohol poisoning. The results can be deadly.

MYTH #2:

“People pass out from drinking too much. It happens all the time - nothing to worry about”

Alcohol poisoning is a potential medical emergency. A drunk person is often laughed at for his behaviour, and friends are sometimes amused if they pass out. Nine times out of ten the person will wake up the next day. However, sometimes they do not. The results of alcohol poisoning are tragic and painful. People are left thinking “we should have done something.” And they are right.

You need to know how the body responds to alcohol before you can understand how alcohol poisoning happens. Alcohol is classified as a depressant drug - its use causes changes in the body and brain. Alcohol use slows down bodily

functions like blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing. If a person has consumed a lot of alcohol, the “slowing down” can lead to “passing out” and unconsciousness. Vital organs (heart and lungs) can be slowed to the point of stopping.

Some people who have low alcohol tolerance or whose body is sensitive to the drug could be seriously at risk after six or seven drinks. Another person may have 10 drinks, be very intoxicated, but not suffer from unconsciousness. There are few absolutes.

Important to note: the body only oxidizes about one ounce (approx. one drink) an hour. If people drink very quickly (shots, drinking games, beer bong) they may pass out and seem fine, but all the alcohol hasn't reached their brain yet. When it does, they could stop breathing in their sleep. That's why you need to constantly evaluate anyone who is semi-conscious or unconscious to make sure they are okay.

MYTH #3:

“The best thing to do for a person who passes out after drinking is to take them home and let them sleep it off”

If you encounter someone who could be experiencing alcohol poisoning, you should:

1. Try to wake the person: Determine if they are responsive. Are they unconscious? Try and call their name or pinch their skin and watch for a response ... Call for help if the person does not react.
2. Turn the person on their side/Do not

leave them: This provides an open airway if they vomit so they will not choke. Monitor their breathing and make sure they don't roll over. Only leave them if you have to go to a phone or get help.

3. Check skin colour or temperature: Is enough blood getting to the skin? A sign your friend needs help is pale or bluish skin, or cold and clammy skin. This person is not getting enough oxygen.

4. Check the person's breathing: If a person is breathing irregularly with a few breaths and then nothing for a time - get medical attention. If their breathing is slow or shallow, less than 8 breaths a minute, or more than 10 seconds between breaths, you should call for help.

5. There are no absolutes - everyone is different: These are just some of the common signs of acute alcohol poisoning. A person may have one, or none. It is a serious situation if you can't wake the person. If you are concerned, don't hesitate to call for help.

MYTH #4:

“If my friend passed out, I wouldn't call for help because I wouldn't want them to get in trouble”

Better safe than sorry. When in doubt, call residence life staff, a hospital, or campus safety. None of the consequences of a pumped stomach compare to a lost life.

