

# Alcohol Poisoning / Alcohol Overdose (AOD)

Alcohol poisoning is a serious — and sometimes deadly — consequence of consuming large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time.

## Signs of Alcohol Poisoning:

- ✓ Person cannot be roused / unconscious
- ✓ Person appears confused or in a stupor
- ✓ No response to pinching the skin
- ✓ Vomiting while sleeping
- ✓ Seizures
- ✓ Slow breathing (fewer than 8 breaths per minute)
- ✓ Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- ✓ Low body temperature (hypothermia), bluish skin color, paleness

***Don't be afraid  
to call 911.***

**Don't wait for all of these symptoms to be present before you seek help.**

***A person who is unconscious or  
can't be awakened is at risk of dying.***

## What Can Happen:

- ✓ Victim chokes on own vomit
- ✓ Breathing slows, becomes irregular, stops
- ✓ Heart beats irregularly or stops
- ✓ Hypothermia (low body temperature) leads to cardiac arrest
- ✓ Hypoglycemia (too little blood sugar) leads to seizures
- ✓ Untreated severe dehydration from vomiting can cause seizures, permanent brain damage, or death.

## Who Has Increased Risk?

**Youth** – more likely to binge drink; don't know how much is too much

**Female** – alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

**Small Height/Weight** - alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

**Empty Stomach** - alcohol enters the bloodstream faster

**Poor Health** – more vulnerable to damaging effects of alcohol

**Drug Use / Medication** – mixing drugs and alcohol increases the risk of overdose



# Alcohol Poisoning / Alcohol Overdose (AOD)

Drinking too much too quickly can affect your breathing, heart rate and gag reflex and potentially lead to coma and death.

Even after a person stops drinking, the heart keeps beating, and alcohol in the stomach continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body, depressing the nerve system even more.

***Don't leave an unconscious person alone.***

**The only thing that reverses the effects of alcohol is time.**

Nothing else will sober you up -- drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, sleeping it off, or walking it off. None of these will help.

**If you suspect that someone may have ingested a fatal dose of alcohol, help is required immediately:**

- ✓ Call 911 and stay with the victim.
- ✓ Keep the victim from choking on vomit.
- ✓ Tell medical personnel the symptoms and, if you know, how much alcohol the victim drank. Prompt action may save the life of a friend, or your own.

**Bystanders (friends, parents, strangers) have a responsibility:**

- ✓ Know the danger signals.
- ✓ Do not wait for all symptoms to be present.
- ✓ Be aware that a person who has passed out may die.
- ✓ If there is any suspicion of AOD, call 911. Don't try to guess the level of drunkenness.

**Sources / Resources:**

<http://www.gordie.org/home.aspx>

<http://www.brad21.org>

<http://www.withcarson.com>

<http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov>

<http://www.hazingprevention.org/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/alcohol-poisoning/DS00861>

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/SafeSobr/15qp/web/idalc.html>

***Don't hesitate.  
Be safe, not sorry.***

