

What Is Alcohol Poisoning?

Alcohol poisoning is another term for an alcohol overdose, which may occur when individuals consume so much alcohol that their bodies can no longer process it fast enough. Alcohol poisoning and overdoses are potentially lethal; the human body simply cannot tolerate or process excessive amounts of alcohol. Too many college students have died as a result of alcohol poisoning.

What Are the Signs or Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning or Overdose?

The signs or symptoms of alcohol poisoning include (not all of these needs to be present):

- Confusion or stupor
- Vomiting while passed out, not waking up after vomiting, or incoherent while vomiting
- Seizures
- Breathing is slow (less than 8 breaths per minute) or irregular, with 10 seconds or more between breaths
- Weak pulse, very rapid pulse, or very slow pulse
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- Loss of consciousness: Inability to awaken a person with loud shouting, or inability of a person to remain awake for more than 2-3 minutes or to carry on a coherent conversation when awake (semi-conscious)

*A person who has lost consciousness and cannot be awakened is in danger of dying. Help is needed immediately.

How Do I Help a Friend Who Might Be Experiencing Alcohol Poisoning or Overdose?

1. Call 911. Then (if you are in the residence halls) call or send someone else to notify your RA on duty, but don't leave the person alone.
2. Stay with the person until emergency help arrives.
3. Be prepared to give the emergency medical personnel as much information as possible including the amount and type of alcohol or substances consumed.

What Should I NOT Do When Helping Someone Experiencing Alcohol Poisoning or Overdose?

- **Do not hesitate to call 911.** The person's life is in danger. Better to be safe than sorry.
- **Do not leave the person alone.** The person may seem to be okay, but the alcohol ingested may take some time to be absorbed before peak levels are reached in the brain.
- **Do not try to give the person anything to eat or drink.**
- **Do not put the person in a cold shower.** The person could fall or the shock could make him/her pass out.
- **Don't just let him or her "sleep it off."**