

# Top Ten Myths About Alcohol

**1 MYTH:** Alcohol improves my sexual performance.

**FACT:** Although you may think that drinking makes you better in bed, physiologically alcohol reduces your performance.

**2 MYTH:** I can drink and still be in control.

**FACT:** Drinking impairs your judgment, which increases the likelihood that you will do something you'll later regret such as having unprotected sex, being involved in date rape, damaging property, or being victimized by others.

**3 MYTH:** Drinking isn't all that dangerous.

**FACT:** One in three 18- to 24-year-olds admitted to emergency rooms for serious injuries are intoxicated. And alcohol is also associated with homicides, suicides, and drownings.

**4 MYTH:** I can sober up quickly if I have to.

**FACT:** It takes about 3 hours to eliminate the alcohol content of two drinks, depending on your weight. Nothing can speed up this process—not even coffee or cold showers.

**5 MYTH:** It's ok for me to drink to keep up with my boyfriend.

**FACT:** Women process alcohol differently. No matter how much he drinks, if you drink the same amount as your boyfriend, you will be more intoxicated and more impaired.

**6 MYTH:** There is no point in postponing drinking until I'm over 21.

**FACT:** Research shows that the longer you postpone drinking, the less likely you are to ever experience alcohol-related problems.

**7 MYTH:** I can manage to drive well enough after a few drinks.

**FACT:** About one-half of all fatal traffic crashes among 18- to 24-year-olds involve alcohol. Your impairment is related to your blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Depending on your weight, you can have a BAC of 0.02% after only one drink, which can slow your reaction time and make it difficult to concentrate on two things simultaneously. A BAC of 0.03% can significantly impair your steering. At 0.04% your vision begins to focus on the center of the road and you cannot respond as well to street signs, traffic signals, and pedestrians. By 0.05% your driving will be noticeably erratic, especially to the police.

**8 MYTH:** I'd be better off if I learn to "hold my liquor."

**FACT:** If you have to drink increasingly larger amounts of alcohol to get a "buzz" or get "high," you are developing tolerance. This increases your vulnerability to many serious problems, including alcoholism.

**9 MYTH:** I have to drink to fit in.

**FACT:** Your peers don't drink as much as you think they do. A recent survey of more than 44,000 college students shows that most students drink little or no alcohol on a weekly basis.

**10 MYTH:** Beer doesn't have as much alcohol as hard liquor.

**FACT:** A 12-ounce bottle of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a standard shot of 80-proof liquor (either straight or in a mixed drink) or 5 ounces of wine.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

National Institutes of Health



Questions?

Visit your campus health center or NIAAA at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>