



# SOCIAL DRINKING and YOU

## What social drinking is all about?

Social drinking and how it affects all of us is the primary focus of this publication.

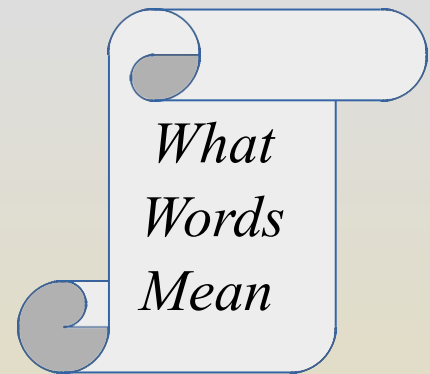
You'll find details about alcoholic beverages. And how they affect you.

I'm not a social drinker. Encounters with the effects of alcohol came during my registered nurse work days. I cared for patients with alcohol-related issues.

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**Alcohol misuse** is used as an umbrella term by authoritative resources in different parts of the world to describe alcohol abuse, harmful drinking and risky drinking.



**Intoxication and impairment:** aren't interchangeable words

If someone is intoxicated after the consumption of alcohol, they're likely impaired.

Someone says, I'm intoxicated with joy. You say that someone is visually impaired or that the fog impairs the visibility on a highway.

**Binge drinking:** drinking beyond acceptable limits in one session.

**Blood Alcohol Content:** amount of alcohol in your bloodstream

**.08:** legal upper limit of the blood alcohol content at a specific time



## Check the Percentage

Every beverage contains some pure alcohol.  
Not all beverages are created equal.  
Check the label.

You'll see the concentration as a percentage with a number like 25% alc/volume.

Why are the percentages different on different bottles?

Percentages depend on the manufacturing process. Wine is created by fermentation. Rum and gin, known as hard liquor, are created by distillation.  
Any hard liquor has the higher alcohol concentration.



The percentage of alcohol determines how much alcohol will eventually be absorbed in your bloodstream. Then, the percentage changes to a number known as the Blood Alcohol Content (BAC).

Your BAC is a personal number, like your blood pressure reading. What's a safe BAC level? According to the website [webmd.com](http://webmd.com), a normal reading is no alcohol.

**Know the percentage of alcohol in a beverage.  
Think percentages when you're drinking.**

## Your BAC Tells a Personal Story

Imagine thinking you're close to .08, having a few more drinks and driving home.

Imagine knowing rain is coming, going out the door with rain gear and walking outside protected from the raindrops.

The two scenarios have one thing in common: thinking about an outcome.

Unfortunately, the first scenario is common and sometimes has a tragic outcome.

So, the best defense against drinking alcohol to the level of impairment is to recognize the effect a variety of alcoholic beverages has on your body.

It's All  
About  
You!

### Take care of your BAC

Consider this scenario.

You've a beer or two, followed by a glass or two of wine when you're relaxing at a football or baseball game.

Later, after cocktails, at a barbecue you drink wine or beer.

Your BAC will increase manyfold, depending on what you have consumed.

Eating when you drink only affects how your body absorbs the alcohol. Absorption depends on a myriad of individual traits, including gender.

**Nothing changes the concentration of the alcohol.**

## Do You Know What You Are Consuming?



Complex is a word that goes well with well with alcohol. Think the word alcohol and you'll associate it with:

- Wine, beer, gin, ale and more
- Medications
- Food such as Brandied Peach and Shrimp Scampi

All the alcohol you consume starts as ethyl alcohol. The manufacturing process, either fermentation or distillation, determines the amount of ethyl alcohol that you consume. Every familiar drop has a specific percentage.

Size	Beverage	Content
12 ounces (355 ml)	regular beer	about 5 percent alcohol
8 - 9 ounces (237-266 ml)	malt beer	about 7 percent alcohol
5 ounces (148 ml)	unfortified wine	about 12 percent alcohol
1.5 ounces (44ml)	80-proof hard liquor	about 40 percent alcohol

Source: The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

## Social Drinking Carries **Risks**

When you're having a good time with a group of people, sometimes things just go wrong. You may find yourself an onlooker or victim of two different conditions.

Risks lurk when you're part of the social drinking crowd. Be aware of alcohol intolerance and alcohol poisoning, a part of alcohol consumption.

**Alcohol Intolerance:** a condition that affects some people.

This condition begs that you become familiar with the ingredients in any alcoholic beverage. When I say that I *have* an alcohol intolerance to a specific beverage I'm saying I may have an adverse reaction.

Ever heard someone say, "I get a headache or my face flushes when I drink that beverage"?

Don't chastise.

Don't suggest another beverage.

Just move on and allow them to decline.

### **Alcohol Poisoning**

Be aware of the term alcohol poisoning. Alcohol may be a depressant, but it's not poison. Poisoning only results when you've consumed too much in a short period of time. Watch what you drink because alcohol poisoning is dangerous.

### **The Morning After**

When forgetfulness creeps in and a little alcohol consumption seems OK, there's also a time of wishing you hadn't. It's known as "the morning-after" or a hangover.

## Closing Thoughts

You're doing a disservice to yourself and everyone else, if you're not aware. A few sips is the starting point to impairment.

BAC



## RESOURCES

Surfing the [addictions.com](https://www.addictions.com) website, I found this statement, "Nowadays, the word "addiction" has become a hot-button issue as its effects touch the lives of more and more people".

The [Alcoholics Anonymous \(AA\)](https://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org) website, an organization that helps individuals deal with addiction provides detailed information of North American resources.

# *Thank You*

HubSpot stock photos  
<https://www.hubspot.com>

Sources:  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org>  
<https://www.webmd.com>

This information is intended as a guide to help you make decisions about social drinking.

It does not intend to replace the expertise of healthcare professionals who offer appropriate guidance.