

BINGE DRINKING

Binge drinking is when someone drinks a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time and becomes very drunk. This can lead to alcohol poisoning and possible death.

According to Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines, binge drinking is:



A standard drink looks like:



What are the dangers of binge drinking?

When people binge drink, it affects their behaviour and ability to make good decisions. It can sometimes cause them to do things they would not normally do.

Getting very drunk can lead to:

- Impaired driving
- Becoming violent or aggressive
- Blacking out (you forget what happened or what you did while you were drunk)
- Having unprotected or unwanted sex
- Considering suicide when feeling sad
- Worsening depression, anxiety and other mental health problems
- Being the victim of physical or sexual violence
- **Alcohol poisoning and possible death**

How does alcohol poisoning happen?

It takes your body more than one hour to break down one standard drink. If you drink more alcohol than your liver can get rid of, the alcohol builds up in the blood and can poison your body. This is dangerous because you could pass out, throw up and choke to death on your own vomit.

What are the signs of alcohol poisoning?

- Confusion
- Seizures
- Passing out and cannot be awakened
- Throwing up
- Slow or uneven breathing
- Bluish skin colour or pale skin
- Cold or clammy skin

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What to do?

If someone is very drunk but awake and able to talk:



Stay with them and try to keep them awake and sitting up.



Give them water, if they can drink it.



Keep them warm to avoid hypothermia.

WHAT NOT TO DO?



Do not let them drink any more alcohol.



Do not make them throw up because they could choke.



Do not leave them alone.

If someone is passed out and not able to talk, they are at risk of dying.

- 1 **Get help.** Call your local emergency line and take them to the health centre.
- 2 **Roll them on their side.** This will stop them from choking if they throw up.
- 3 **Stay with the person.** Do not leave them alone to "sleep it off".



Safer drinking tips:

➤ Set your limits and stick to them.



➤ Eat before and while you are drinking.



➤ For every drink of alcohol, have one non-alcoholic drink.



➤ Drink slowly. Do not drink more than two drinks in any three hours.



➤ Do not drive any motorized or off-road vehicle (ATV, snowmobile, boat) or drive with others who have been drinking.



Finding help

If you or someone you know wants help to reduce or stop drinking:

- Talk to a health care provider, mental health worker or social worker.
- Call the Kamatsiaqtut Help Line (1-867-979-3333).
- Talk to an Elder, a family member or a trusted friend.
- Contact Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-Anon (if offered in your community).

