

How Alcohol Kills

Picture this. You are driving home late one night and you see a brutal car accident in the middle of the interstate. It's a 16 year old girl in one car, and a father with his child in the other. You would probably assume this is the fathers fault, right? Wrong. The 16 year old was drunk driving. Not only was she drunk driving, but she was underage drinking as well. This could have been easily avoided if the 16 year old hadn't been drinking. The following reasons will tell you exactly what alcohol can do to the mind, how it can kill, and how to avoid this.

When drinking large amounts of alcohol in short periods of time, you have a high risk of alcohol poisoning. Alcohol poisoning is dangerous and deadly. According to mayoclinic.org symptoms include:

- Vomiting.
- Seizures.
- Slow breathing, which is fewer than eight breaths a minute.
- Breathing that's not regular. This is when there is a gap of more than 10 seconds between breaths.
- Skin that looks blue, gray or pale.
- Low body temperature, also known as hypothermia.
- Trouble staying conscious or awake.
- Confusion

According to the CDC, there are 2,200 alcohol poisoning deaths each year in the US. On average, 6 people die in the US each day due to alcohol poisoning. Ways to avoid alcohol poisoning is to not drink on an empty stomach, drink alcohol in moderation, and don't drink along with certain medicines. The best way to avoid alcohol poisoning overall, is to not drink at all.

Another result of drinking alcohol is various types of cancers. The common cancers that can be caused by alcohol consumption are breast cancer, bowel cancer, multiple types of throat cancer, and liver cancer. The cancer risk is increased when you drink alcohol because according to cancerresearchuk.org, alcohol can damage cells and

stop cells from repairing damage. They also say alcohol makes it easier for cells in your mouth and throat to absorb dangerous chemicals. More than 522,000 alcohol-associated cancers occurred in the United States in 2021, including more than 155,000 among men and 367,000 among women.

Drinking too much alcohol can weaken your immune system, making your body a much easier target for disease. According to [niaaa.nih.gov](https://www.niaaa.nih.gov), “Chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much. Drinking a lot on a single occasion slows your body’s ability to ward off infections – even up to 24 hours after getting drunk.” Alcohol alters the numbers and relative abundances of microbes in the gut microbiome, an extensive community of microorganisms in the intestine that aid in normal gut function. Alcohol disrupts communication between these organisms and the intestinal immune system. Alcohol consumption also damages epithelial cells, T cells, and neutrophils in the GI system, disrupting gut barrier function and facilitating leakage of microbes into the circulation.

According to www.niaaa.nih.gov “Alcohol interferes with the brain’s communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. Alcohol makes it harder for the brain areas controlling balance, memory, speech, and judgment to do their jobs, resulting in a higher likelihood of injuries and other negative outcomes. Long-term heavy drinking causes alterations in the neurons, such as reductions in their size.” Alcohol can reduce your inhibitions and lead you to behave in a way you normally wouldn’t. You may commit a crime, behave in an antisocial way or do something embarrassing. Your behaviour could affect your friendships, your work and your family. If you drink a lot or become dependent on alcohol, you could end up spending a lot of money on your drinking.

While drinking may make you feel good for a few minutes, it's not good in the long run. Drinking makes it much easier for you to get cancer, alcohol poisoning, mental and physical issues, and an overall decline in your health. You can easily protect yourself and many other people by staying sober. You won't regret it.