

Alcohol

Combining alcohol with other central nervous system depressants like Xanax or painkillers like Vicodin can slow your heartbeat and breathing and may result in death.

Class of drug:	Depressant
Active ingredient:	Ethanol/Ethyl alcohol, which is made by fermenting or distilling grains, fruit and vegetables. Alcohol is found in beverages like beer, wine, and hard liquor like rum and vodka.
What it looks like:	Liquid, either clear or colored
How it's used:	Taken orally
Duration of high:	Effects of high can last from one to four hours. The effect of alcohol on the body by volume is the same. It is the amount of ethanol consumed that affects a person most, not the type of alcoholic drink.
Effects:	Physical —small amounts can produce relaxed muscles, headache, nausea; somewhat large amounts can cause slurred speech, double vision; very large amounts can cause respiratory depression, coma and death
	Mental —small amounts can impair judgment and decrease inhibitions and anxiety; large amounts can produce memory loss
	Long-term —liver and brain damage, heart disease, cancer, ulcers, pancreatitis
Withdrawal symptoms:	Restlessness, sweating, tremors, insomnia, anxiety, convulsions, death
Detection in the body:	With a healthy liver, an average person can eliminate one drink (.6 oz of alcohol) per hour. Detection time in urine is one to two days.



A standard drink contains about 14 grams of pure alcohol, which is equal to:

- 12 ounces of regular beer, which is usually about 5% alcohol.
- 5 ounces of wine, which is typically about 12% alcohol.
- 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits (gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey, etc.), which is about 40% alcohol.

Binge drinking is a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08g/dL or above. This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks, and when women consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours.

Trends & Statistics

In 2017, 15.5 percent of high school students in the United States reported that they drank alcohol for the first time before the age of 13. Approximately 60 percent of students said they had at least one drink of alcohol in their lifetime, compared to 63 percent in 2015 and 79 percent two decades ago.

(U.S. Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017)

Sources: National Household Survey—US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse Warning Network, US Department of Health and Human Services—Center for Disease and Prevention, Illinois Drug Education Alliance