



AMBULANCE FACT SHEET

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Binge drinking and its effects



The following information is provided to assist you in understanding the effects of alcohol and what to do if you find someone is suffering from alcohol intoxication.

For all medical emergencies dial Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

Alcohol is a drug and there are three main types of drugs that affect the central nervous system – depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens.

Alcohol ('booze', 'grog') is known as a depressant and slows down the functions of the central nervous system.

Abuse of alcohol, such as binge drinking or drinking to intoxication, can cause unconsciousness, vomiting and even death.

WHAT IS BINGE DRINKING?

Binge drinking is drinking heavily over a short period of time or drinking continuously over a number of days or weeks.

An individual may not necessarily set out to drink a lot but as they may be unsure of their limits, this can result in drinking too much over a short period of time. Binge drinking can expose you to injury or to unnecessary risks to yourself and others.

DANGERS OF INTOXICATION

When you drink to intoxication you may put yourself in situations which

might be dangerous, embarrassing or which you may later regret. You are more likely to take risks and make bad decisions.

AMBULANCE TIPS FOR HAVING A SAFE AND GOOD TIME

- > Make sure you have something to eat prior to drinking alcohol
- > Try to drink water or soft drinks between alcoholic drinks
- > Always watch your drink – drink spiking is a reality
- > Make sure you tell your mates where and with who you are with at all times
- > Look after your mates and NEVER leave an intoxicated or drug affected mate on their own
- > Mixing alcohol with other drugs can be very dangerous
- > Leave the car at home and make sure you have enough money for a cab fare home
- > If you and your friends do plan on driving a car, make sure to nominate a non-drinker to drive
- > Never get behind the wheel and drive if you have been drinking
- > Never get into a car being driven by someone who has been drinking

IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP

To confirm if someone is unconscious squeeze their shoulders and shout their name if they do not wake up, then they are unconscious) Call Triple Zero (000) immediately if any or a combination of the following is observed:

- > If their skin is cold, clammy, pale, or bluish/purplish (this means they are not getting enough oxygen)
- > If someone is vomiting and they won't wake up
- > If they are breathing very slowly (more than 10 seconds between breaths)

Stay with the patient until the ambulance arrives and follow Ambulance call-taker instructions.

If the situation is less serious, give them some water, help them into a cab or, assist them to get home.

FIRST AID COURSES

Ambulance encourages everyone to learn first aid. To enrol in a first aid course contact an accredited provider listed with the Workcover Authority.

References:

*Ambulance Service of NSW
NSW Health*

For further information please contact: