

ALCOHOL FIRST AID



WHAT IS IT?

Alcohol poisoning – sometimes called alcohol overdose – can happen when someone drinks a lot of alcohol on one occasion. This behaviour is called bingeing, particularly if the alcohol is drunk over a short period of time. There is no definitive amount that will lead to someone experiencing alcohol poisoning, as there are lots of factors at play such as body size and health. Basically what happens is that alcohol is being drunk at a faster rate than the liver can filter it out of the blood, meaning that the body's systems don't work properly.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Drinking too much alcohol can affect someone's breathing, heart rate and gag reflex, so they may show some or all of the following:

- slurring words or being unable to speak
- slow breathing
- loss of coordination
- confusion
- vomiting
- skin that is pale, cold and clammy
- seizures
- slow pulse
- drowsiness
- loss of bladder or bowel control
- unconsciousness.

Some of these may combine, making them even more dangerous: for example, someone may vomit while unconscious which may cause them to choke, and this can be fatal.

WHAT TO DO

Alcohol poisoning can be life-threatening, but there are some measures that can help:

- Stay with the person – leaving them alone makes them very vulnerable, and their state may deteriorate.
- If the person is awake, encourage them to sit up and sip water – don't give more alcohol or anything containing caffeine.
- If they are being sick, be calm and reassuring – don't try and make someone be sick as this can be dangerous.
- If the person has passed out, put them in the recovery position and check they are breathing OK – stay with them in case they are sick.
- Keep them warm – don't put them in a cold shower or bath, as this brings with it the risk of injury and hypothermia.
- Get medical help, as the person may need fluids administered through a drip, or support for their breathing – there may also be things happening that can't be seen, such as liver and heart failure, so do treat it seriously.
- Try and find out if there is anything else going on, for example, has the person taken any drugs, are they on medication, or do they have any health conditions – this will help health professionals identify the best treatment for the individual.

For more information, go to:



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-poisoning/>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity
www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

— The —
**Wellbeing
Hub**
— from Teen Tips —



www.teentips.co.uk