

Long-Term Effects of Alcohol Use

Problems, such as negative physical interventions with medications, driving while impaired, and interpersonal problems with family and friends, can manifest themselves after drinking over a short period of time. Other problems, however, can develop more gradually over time, and may become noticeable only after excessive drinking over an extended period of time. These are problems that represent the long-term effects of alcohol abuse. It is also important to point out that women may develop alcohol related health problems after drinking less alcohol than men over a shorter period of time.

The Long Term Effects

Due to the FACT that ALCOHOL affects every ORGAN in the body, long-term EXCESSIVE drinking puts a person at RISK for developing CRITICAL health problems. So what's the bottom line about EXCESSIVE drinking? In short, the LONG-term EFFECTS of alcohol ABUSE can lead to the gradual BREAKDOWN of various ORGANS and SYSTEMS in the body that can result in SERIOUS, if not FATAL, health issues.

Alcohol Related Liver Disease

One of the long-term EFFECTS of alcohol abuse and ALCOHOLISM is alcohol related LIVER disease. In fact, more than TWO million Americans will SUFFER from alcohol RELATED liver disease. One of the liver's JOBS is to PROTECT the body by BREAKING down dangerous CHEMICALS. Heavy drinkers can SUFFER from a CONDITION known as a FATTY liver, caused when PARTS of the LIVER begin BREAKING down. The initial SIGNS and symptoms include NAUSEA, loss of APPETITE, weight LOSS, and FEVER. If the person STOPS drinking when these SYMPTOMS occur, their liver can RECOVER. However, if they CONTINUE to drink, the PROBLEM may become WORSE and may turn into an incurable DISORDER known as CIRRHOSIS. This is caused when the CELLS of the

_____ LIVER _____ break down and die after _____ REPEATED
exposure to _____ TOXINS _____ or _____ POISONS _____ in the
blood. The _____ DEAD _____ cells are then replaced by _____ SCAR
tissue, preventing the _____ LIVER _____ from _____ FUNCTIONING
properly.

Alcohol Related Brain Disease

The _____ EFFECTS _____ of long-term alcohol _____ ABUSE _____ is
related to _____ BRAIN _____ damage. People who have been _____ DRINKING
in a _____ HAZARDOUS _____ and _____ ABUSIVE _____ manner for
_____ LONG _____ periods of time run the _____ RISK _____ of
developing _____ SERIOUS _____ and ongoing _____ CHANGES
in the _____ BRAIN _____. Alcohol _____ DISRUPTS _____ the parts of
the _____ BRAIN _____ that are responsible for _____ MEMORY
and _____ DECISION _____ making. Alcohol can also _____ BLOCK
the _____ MESSAGES _____ that are _____ SENT _____ to the brain.
This can lead to _____ PROBLEMS _____ with _____ MOVEMENT _____,
vision and _____ HEARING _____.

Alcohol Related Heart Disease

The _____ EFFECTS _____ of long-term alcohol _____ ABUSE _____
is related to some _____ CANCERS _____. Indeed, _____ HEAVY _____ long-
term drinking _____ INCREASES _____ the _____ RISK _____ of
developing certain types of _____ CANCER _____, especially cancer of the
_____ MOUTH _____, throat, _____ VOICE _____ box and
_____ ESOPHAGUS _____. Excessive _____ DRINKING _____ may
also _____ INCREASE _____ the risk of developing _____ COLON
and _____ RECTAL _____ cancer.

Alcohol Related Pancreatitis

The effects of long-term _____ ALCOHOL _____ abuse are related to
_____ PANCREATITIS _____. Pancreatitis involves the _____ SWELLING
of the pancreas _____ LINING _____. The _____ PANCREAS _____ helps
to _____ REGULATE _____ the body's blood _____ SUGAR
levels by producing _____ INSULIN _____. The pancreas is _____ VITAL
in _____ DIGESTING _____ the _____ FOOD _____ people eat. When
the pancreas is _____ SWOLLEN _____ because of _____ EXCESSIVE
alcohol, the _____ PASSAGEWAY _____ from the pancreas to the _____ SMALL
intestine becomes _____ BLOCKED _____ and the _____ CHEMICALS
needed for _____ DIGESTION _____ cannot _____ PASS _____ into

the small intestine. These CHEMICALS begin to DESTROY the pancreas causing PAIN and VOMITING. Pancreatitis is associated with EXCESSIVE weight LOSS and extreme ABDOMINAL pain, and in SEVERE cases can lead to DEATH.

Bing Drinking and Alcohol Poisoning

Some people CHOOSE to drink LARGE amounts of alcohol in a SHORT period of time. BINGE drinking, drinking FIVE or more ALCOHOLIC beverages at ONE setting, is a serious SOCIAL problem. The MORE a person DRINKS, the closer to a dangerous EXTREME the person is. What ever the REASON for the BINGE drinking, it can have DANGEROUS consequences.

Binge DRINKING can severely IMPAIR the drinker's BODY systems. It can also LEAD to alcohol POISONING, a SEVERE and potentially FATAL physical REACTION to an alcohol OVERDOSE. Remember, alcohol DEPRESSES or SLOWS down the BODY systems and your CENTRAL nervous system. When enough ALCOHOL is taken at ONE time, you can DIE.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

PREGNANT women who DRINK put the health of their CHILD at risk. A DISORDER called FETAL alcohol SYNDROME, or FAS refers to a group of BIRTH defects caused by the EFFECTS of ALCOHOL on the UNBORN child. FAS occurs when alcohol PASSES through the UMBILICAL cord to the FETUS.

Babies BORN with this SYNDROME may suffer from HEART defects, malformed FACES, delayed GROWTH, poor MOTOR development and MENTAL retardation.

Tragically, DRINKING during PREGNANCY is the leading PREVENTABLE cause of mental RETARDATION in the United States. No one is exactly SURE how MUCH alcohol must reach the UNBORN child in order for FAS to occur, so many DOCTORS advise women NOT to drink at all WHILE they are pregnant.