



#8955

WITHOUT WARNING: THE DANGERS OF BINGE DRINKING & ALCOHOL POISONING

Grade Levels: 9-13+

17 minutes

HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA 1997

2 Instructional Graphics Enclosed

DESCRIPTION

Alcohol poisoning results when too much alcohol is ingested too quickly. Binge drinking and alcohol poisoning account for over 4,000 fatalities annually--more than by drug overdosing. Parents of teenaged victims share their very similar stories and urge education awareness. Lists the symptoms of alcohol poisoning and stresses what a person needs to know, to do, and not to do in order to save a life.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Health

- ◆ Standard: Understands aspects of substance use and abuse
 - Benchmark: Knows influences that promote alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
 - Benchmark: Recognizes high-risk substance abuse situations that pose an immediate threat to oneself or one's friends or family (e.g., drunk and drugged driving, violent arguments) as well as how and where to obtain help

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate alcohol is a drug.
2. To demonstrate alcohol can be lethal in large doses.
3. To study the symptoms of alcohol poisoning.
4. To emphasize the gravity of overdosing on alcohol.
5. To demonstrate what to do if someone needs help.
6. To emphasize that "sleeping it off" is not a safe option.
7. To illustrate underage drinking is unsafe and illegal.
8. To study the effects of alcohol poisoning.
9. To emphasize that teens can and do die from binge drinking.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When people think about the dangers of alcohol, they usually focus on the problems related to alcoholism or drunk driving. Unfortunately, most people do not consider another significant danger: the risk of alcohol poisoning. In fact, many people are not even aware that such a thing exists. It is a common misconception that the worst side effects of alcohol use are vomiting, passing out, or waking up with a hangover. In reality, the worst side effect of excessive drinking is sudden death.



Death by alcohol poisoning is not uncommon. Young people are at a very high risk of dying from alcohol poisoning.

Not much is being done to combat this deadly ignorance. We don't see warnings about it on labels of alcoholic beverages, and the media does not usually focus its attention on it.

One might ask: isn't moderation the answer? The answer is no; teens simply must not drink at all. First, consuming alcohol is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. Second, young men and women under the age of 21 are in the process of maturing physically. A teen's brain is still developing in critical ways—most specifically, the myelin sheath that covers the nerves to the brain's addiction center is not fully formed until the age of 22.

The treachery of alcohol poisoning is not an isolated problem for underage drinkers, either. Anyone who drinks alcohol in excess is in jeopardy of dying from an overdose because alcohol reduces inhibitions and increases thirst; one drink can lead to many, many more.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What did Mrs. Hickok mean when she said, "Designated drivers are good, but you better know what you are doing"?
2. Why is it important for teens not to drink alcohol?
3. Does death occur only when a person is rapidly drinking hard liquor?
4. When vomiting because of drinking alcohol, why is it so much more dangerous than when one just has an upset stomach?
5. Why would one beer at a party be so bad? It couldn't hurt you if you didn't drive, right?
6. Should you wait until all the symptoms of alcohol poisoning are present before calling 911 for an ambulance?
7. Wouldn't it be faster to take the overdosed person to the ER in your car instead of calling an ambulance?
8. Wouldn't you get in trouble with the law if you had been drinking too? Shouldn't you just call 911 and not go with the victim to the ER?

Applications and Activities

1. Complete the "True or False Worksheet." Correct any errors. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
2. Ask several people to answer the "True or False Worksheet." Select individuals of different age groups. Pool and analyze results.
 - a. Which question was most often answered correctly?
 - b. Which question was the hardest for the respondents?
 - c. What was the average age of the respondents?
 - d. Which age group answered the most questions correctly?
 - e. What kind of efforts must be made to educate all people about binge drinking?
3. Discuss the information sheet "What Can You Do?" (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.) Plan strategies to share this information with other schoolmates.

SUMMARY

The narrator explains that the plague of teenage binge drinking and alcohol poisoning kills thousands of teenagers annually. As we look at a montage of pictures of teens who have died after drinking too much, too quickly, the narrator explains that what allows such tragedies to occur is often a simple lack of knowledge. When it comes to alcohol poisoning, knowing the facts can indeed save a life.

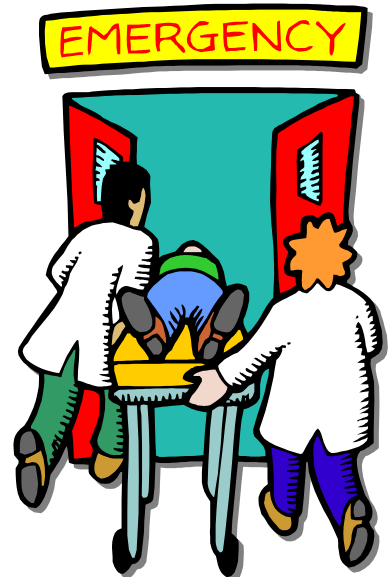
Several parents tell listeners about the events leading to the death of their children. One parent points out that there is no label warning of the dangers of alcohol poisoning. More appropriate labeling, she believes, would save lives.

The narrator tells us, as we watch an emergency room scene, that the negative effects of alcohol are all but ignored. We are shown pictures of ads for alcohol, alcohol-related holiday/birthday cards, a "funny" picture of a man with a hangover, and many more. What we should realize is that there is nothing funny about blackouts or hangovers; and those drink-till-you-drop parties are dangerous.

We are then told the physical facts about rapid binge drinking. Alcohol is a depressant, and it depresses brain signals that control breathing, the heartbeat, and the gag reflexes that prevent inhaling vomit into the lungs. The critical signs for alcohol poisoning include mental confusion, passing out, vomiting while sleeping, convulsions or seizures, slow or irregular breathing, and clammy, blue, or pale skin.

The narrator says that if you think someone might be suffering from alcohol poisoning, you should act quickly. Call 911 for an ambulance, or if sober, drive the victim to the emergency room yourself.

The narrator concludes by reminding the viewers that alcohol is a drug, often a lethal one. What people don't know about alcohol can kill them.



RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Fast Forward: An Alcoholic's Story #3461
- The Quietest Room #3165
- Shatter #3514
- Thinking About Drinking #3187
- The Truth About Drinking #8934



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **UNDER 21**

<http://www.madd.org/under21/default.shtml>

This Mothers Against Drunk Driving presents alcohol facts for teens, such as "Teen Alcohol Myths," and other information.

- **TIPS FOR TEENS: THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL**

<http://www.health.org/govpubs/ph323/>

Get the facts about alcohol and other information from this National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information site. Provides contact information, including a TTY number.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS

- TRUE OR FALSE WORKSHEET
- WHAT CAN YOU DO?



True or False?

Directions: For each statement, please indicate whether you think it is True (T) or False (F).

- | | True or
False |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Alcohol is a poison that can be fatal to users. | _____ |
| 2. Having five or more drinks at a time is considered "Binge drinking." | _____ |
| 3. If you drink too much, it is important to vomit in order to get the alcohol out of your stomach. | _____ |
| 4. Exercise is a good way to help a drunk person sober up, because exercise speeds up the metabolism and the action of the liver. | _____ |
| 5. Eating a big meal after drinking too much will help soak up the alcohol in the stomach. | _____ |
| 6. Caffeine and alcohol cancel each other out. | _____ |
| 7. Doctors treat alcohol overdoses differently than they treat other kinds of drug overdoses. | _____ |
| 8. Sleep is the best medicine for being drunk. | _____ |
| 9. Alcohol can kill you in six to twelve hours. | _____ |



What Can You Do?



Know these signs of alcohol overdose

- Mental confusion, stupor, coma, cannot be roused
- No responses to pinching the skin
- Vomiting while sleeping
- Seizures
- Slow or irregular breathing, less than 8 breaths per minute
- Low body temperature
- Bluish skin color, paleness

Be aware of your responsibility

- Don't try to guess at the victim's level of BAC.
- Be aware of the problem. Don't be embarrassed to go for help.
- Be aware that person who has passed out may die.
- Know the danger signals, but don't wait for all the signals to be present.
- If you have any suspicion of an alcohol overdose, call 911 for help.

What to do if someone has overdosed on alcohol

- Call 911 for an ambulance.
- If you are sober and very near a hospital, drive victim to ER.
- Remain with victim.
- Keep victim from choking on vomit.
- Tell the medics the symptoms you have observed.
- Tell the medics honestly how much victim drank.
- Prompt action may save the life of a friend--or your own life.



What you should NOT do

- Give victim food.
- Give victim black coffee.
- Give victim a cold shower.
- Tell victim to "sleep it off."
- Leave victim alone.
- Make victim "walk it off."