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# ALCOHOL QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWER SHEET

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1. Alcoholism is the disease that develops when people become addicted to alcohol. Alcoholics are people who cannot control their drinking.
2. The only cure for a hangover is time, not coffee or cold showers. A hangover is the feeling people experience after the first effects of excessive drinking wear off. Symptoms can include nausea, headache, thirst, and tiredness. The best way to prevent a hangover is not to drink.
3. Yes, alcohol is a drug. Several hundred thousand people are addicted to heroin, which is often considered the source of the most serious drug problems, but many millions are addicted to alcohol.
4. Alcohol slows down or depresses the pulse and breathing rate of a person who has been drinking. For this reason a person who has been drinking very heavily may lose consciousness ("pass out"). This is the body's way of saying that the person may have reached a point where her/his life is in danger.
5. How alcohol affects people depends upon many factors, including their size, age, health, drinking experience, expectations, mood, how much they drink, how quickly they drink it, how much food they have in their stomach, and where they drink.
6. Drinking problems and alcoholism affect families, friends, employers, and other people on the highways. They also cost us all money for medical services and other costs, such as problems in offices and factories. Half of all murders and one-third of all suicides are alcohol-related.
7. Even moderate drinking during pregnancy can have extremely harmful effects on the unborn baby. Alcoholic women run a great risk of having babies with birth defects. These babies may be deformed or mentally retarded, among other problems.
8. Alcohol can have negative effects on the liver, the stomach lining, and the brain, among other parts of the body.



Directions: Answer the following questions.

# Alcohol Questionnaire

1. What is alcoholism?

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2. What is a hangover, and how can it be cured?

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3. Is alcohol considered a drug, and, if so, can people become addicted to it?

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4. What happens to the heartbeat and breathing rate of a person who has been drinking alcohol?

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5. What can make a difference in the ways different people react to alcohol?

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6. How does a problem drinker or an alcoholic hurt more people than just herself/himself?

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7. Should a pregnant woman be concerned about drinking alcohol? Why or why not?

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8. In what ways can alcohol have negative effects on a person's body?

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# ALCOHOL INFORMATION SHEET

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIPTION

Alcohol is a depressant, a drug that slows down the body's functioning. It's made from fermented grapes or grains and is part of beer, wine, wine coolers, and many forms of liquor, including whiskey, gin, vodka, rum, and brandy.

A 12-ounce can of beer or ale contains about the same amount of alcohol as a 5-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce wine cooler, or a shot glass (1.5 ounces) of liquor. Each has about one-half ounce of alcohol.

People over a certain age can legally buy and use alcohol. However, it is illegal for people under this age to buy or use alcohol.

## EFFECTS ON THE BODY AND HEALTH

How alcohol travels through the body: Alcohol goes down the esophagus to the stomach and intestines. It undergoes little digestion and is absorbed directly into the bloodstream, which carries it to each cell in the body.

The body gets rid of a small amount of the alcohol in the breath, sweat, and urine. The liver slowly breaks down the rest of the alcohol.

### BRAIN

Alcohol affects the cerebrum first, slowing thinking, affecting judgment, and dulling senses. Next to be affected are the centers controlling emotions. The person may get silly, angry, worried, or sad.

As alcohol builds up in the bloodstream, it also affects the cerebellum, interfering at first with coordination and reaction time. Then it affects vital body functions, such as the heartbeat, breathing rate, and digestion. Alcohol can slow the brain's functioning enough to cause unconsciousness or death.

Drinking alcohol while using other drugs, especially depressants like sleeping pills and tranquilizers, is extremely dangerous and can be fatal. Many people are hospitalized or killed every year because they didn't realize that alcohol increases the effects of other depressants and other medication, including some nonprescription allergy medicines.

### EYES

Alcohol relaxes the eye muscles, making it difficult for the user to focus and see clearly.

### HEART

Long-term use of alcohol can weaken the heart muscle, decrease the amount of blood the heart pumps, and produce dangerous changes in the heartbeat. Drinking can lead to high blood pressure. Alcohol use also widens blood vessels in the skin, causing loss of heat.

### LUNGS

Small doses of alcohol can increase the breathing rate, while large doses may slow it down.

### DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Alcohol irritates the lining of the entire digestive system. It can cause problems ranging from vomiting to ulcers to cancer. The risk of cancer of the esophagus is higher among heavy alcohol users, especially those who smoke.

The liver suffers most, as it must slowly eliminate 95 percent of the alcohol from the bloodstream, at the rate of about one-half ounce each hour. Drinking more alcohol, exercising, or drinking coffee does not speed up this rate.

If the person keeps drinking, alcohol builds up in the bloodstream faster than the liver can break it down. Drinking very quickly ("chugging") can result in alcohol poisoning and sometimes death.

As the level of alcohol in the blood rises, it increasingly interferes with the drinker's ability to function physically and mentally.

Drinking over a long period of time can lead to a disease called cirrhosis of the liver. The damaged liver cells can't break down poisons, so these substances build up and create problems throughout the body. Cirrhosis is a leading cause of death among alcoholics.

### MUSCLES

Long-term use of alcohol can lead to muscle weakness.

## EFFECTS ON THE FETUS

If a pregnant woman drinks, her bloodstream carries alcohol directly to her unborn baby. This can cause fetal alcohol syndrome, a pattern of birth defects that may include low birth weight, facial abnormalities, and mental retardation. There is *no* safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.

## EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR

Because alcohol affects judgment, drinkers tend to do and say things they usually wouldn't do or say. Alcohol also interferes with coordination, reflexes, and reaction time, causing problems in walking, talking, operating machines, and driving. As a result, drinkers often become more confident of their skills, including their driving skills, while their ability to use those skills decreases dramatically.

Some drinkers become silly, while others become depressed, angry, violent, or even suicidal. Alcohol is frequently linked with crime and violence.

## DID YOU KNOW. . . ?

### HOW OFTEN DOES ALCOHOL INJURE OR KILL PEOPLE ON OUR HIGHWAYS?

Alcohol is not only harmful to young people physically, emotionally, and socially. In too many cases, drinking—or riding with a drinking driver—is fatal. Alcohol is a factor in a greater number of fatal crashes involving teenage drivers than in any other age group. About four out of every ten teenage deaths in the United States occur in traffic crashes.

Fortunately, each year fewer and fewer young people drink and drive. In the United States in 1982, about one in three 15- to 17-year-olds involved in fatal crashes had been drinking. By 1989 that number had dropped to about one in five.

Still, nearly half the total number of car crashes and six out of ten fatal crashes in the United States involve a driver who has been drinking. In Canada, half of the drivers killed in crashes had been drinking, although that percentage may also be decreasing.

A fatal alcohol-related crash occurs about every 20 minutes in the United States. The number of people in the United States killed in car crashes involving alcohol is higher than the number of United States soldiers killed in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korean War, and Vietnam War combined.

In the United States about 22,000 people die in these crashes every year. In 1987, 4,800 passengers riding with drinking drivers were killed. And every year more than 1,800 Canadians are killed and 56,000 are injured.

### WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS ALCOHOL CAN HARM OR KILL PEOPLE?

Alcohol doesn't just cause deaths on the highway. At least 3 out of every 100 deaths in the United States and 6 out of every 100 deaths in Canada are related to the use of alcohol. This includes people who die from cirrhosis, heart disease, suicides, car crashes and other accidents, and other alcohol-related causes.

In the United States, alcohol is involved in more than 55 percent of arrests, 70 percent of murders and violent crimes, 20 to 36 percent of suicide attempts, 80 percent of spouse abuse, 48 percent of serious burns, 26 percent of fire deaths, and 38 percent of drownings.