



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: ALCOHOL

The Student Health Provider wants you to be aware of facts about alcohol and to consider the effect alcohol has on your life.

Alcohol is a drug. A legal drug. A legal drug with sometimes very devastating effects upon both individuals and our society.

In our society, alcohol-related accidents (automobiles, falls, fires, drownings) and alcohol-related violence (murders, suicides) kill more Americans *every year* than died in the entire Vietnam War.

In the individual, alcohol can be a toxin (poison), with harmful effects on the liver, heart, brain, GI tract, and blood. Liver failure, heart failure, some cancers, ulcers, impotence, depression, birth defects, and impaired immunity (ability to fight infections) are some of the diseases caused by alcohol.

Alcoholism is a dependence on the drug alcohol. Alcoholism puts you at risk for accidental and homicidal (murder) death, as well the diseases listed above.

Four simple questions may reveal whether you have a problem with alcohol:

1. Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about drinking?
4. Have you ever had an eye-opener, a drink the first thing in the morning to get rid of a hangover or steady your nerves?

If you answer yes to two (or more) of these questions, it is likely you are a heavy drinker and possibly an alcoholic.

Keep in mind, denial is a part of the disease -- alcoholics do not recognize the impact alcohol has on themselves and their families. No other potentially fatal disease is denied more than alcoholism.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL:

1. The secret to quitting drinking is *wanting to quit*. There is no magic cure for the addiction of alcohol. Nobody can make you do it or do it for you.
2. Crossroads here at UNCW can provide you with assistance and guidance. Visit Crossroads in Westside Hall or call 962-4236 for assistance.
3. Self-help programs are available. Call Alcoholics Anonymous or another alcohol treatment program (the numbers are in the phone book).
4. Families and friends of alcoholics can obtain help through Al-Anon (the number is available in the phone book or online).
5. Your personal/referral doctor or county health clinic can also assist you in stopping drinking.