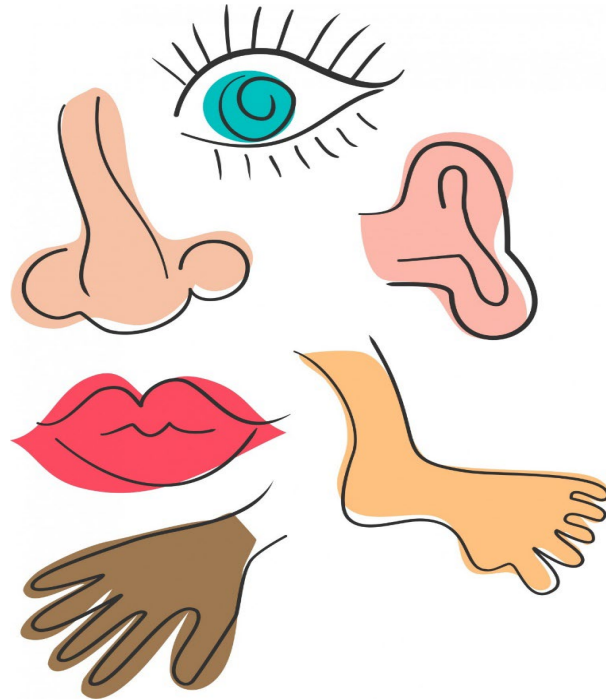


Visit 10- How Does Alcohol Affect My Body?
Getting healthier can start today.

Now that you have decided on some goals,
lets remind ourselves why we are doing
this.....

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health



Drinking too much - on a single occasion or over time - can take a serious toll on your health. Here's how alcohol can affect your body...

<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/alcohols-effects-body>

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

BRAIN

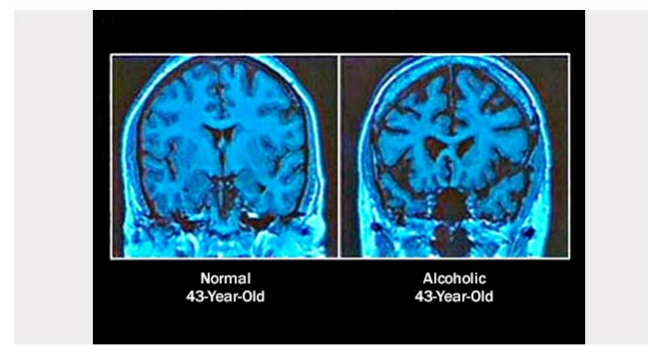
Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways, and can affect the way the brain looks and works. These disruptions can change mood and behavior, and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination.



Straight to Your Head

1 / 16

Thirty seconds after your first sip, alcohol races into your brain. It slows down the chemicals and pathways that your brain cells use to send messages. That alters your mood, slows your reflexes, and throws off your balance. You also can't think straight, which you may not recall later, because you'll struggle to store things in long-term memory.



Your Brain Shrinks

2 / 16

If you drink heavily for a long time, booze can affect how your brain looks and works. Its cells start to change and even get smaller. Too much alcohol can actually shrink your brain. And that'll have big effects on your ability to think, learn, and remember things. It can also make it harder to keep a steady body temperature and control your movements.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

HEART

Drinking a lot over a long time or too much on a single occasion can damage the heart, causing problems including:

- **Cardiomyopathy** - Stretching and drooping of heart muscle
- **Arrhythmias** - Irregular heartbeat
- **Stroke**
- **High Blood Pressure**



An Offbeat Heart

10 / 16

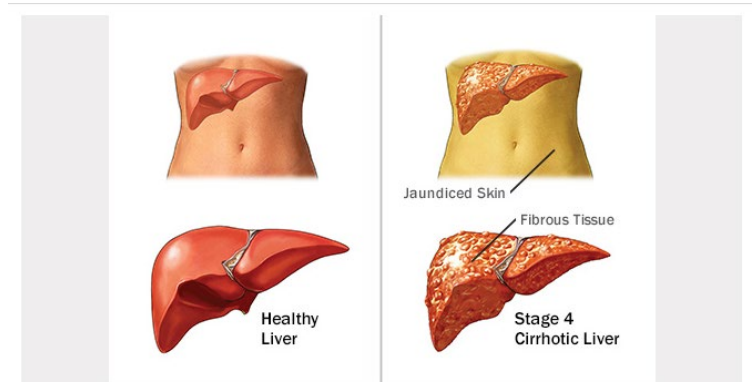
One night of binge drinking can jumble the electrical signals that keep your heart's rhythm steady. If you do it for years, you can make those changes permanent. And, alcohol can literally wear your heart out. Over time, it causes heart muscles to droop and stretch, like an old rubber band. It can't pump blood as well, and that impacts every part of your body.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

LIVER

Heavy drinking takes a toll on the liver, and can lead to a variety of problems and liver inflammations including:

- **Steatosis**, or fatty liver
- **Alcoholic Hepatitis**
- **Fibrosis**
- **Cirrhosis**



The Steps to Liver Disease

7 / 16

Your liver breaks down almost all the alcohol you drink. In the process, it handles a lot of toxins. Over time, heavy drinking makes the organ fatty and lets thicker, fibrous tissue build up. That limits blood flow, so liver cells don't get what they need to survive. As they die off, the liver gets scars and stops working as well, a disease called cirrhosis.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

PANCREAS

Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can eventually lead to pancreatitis, a dangerous inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels in the pancreas that prevents proper digestion.



Pancreas Damage and Diabetes 8 / 16

Normally, this organ makes insulin and other chemicals that help your intestines break down food. But alcohol jams that process up. The chemicals stay inside the pancreas. Along with toxins from alcohol, they cause inflammation in the organ, which can lead to serious damage. After years, that means you won't be able to make the insulin you need, which can lead to diabetes. It also makes you more likely to get pancreatic cancer.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Drinking too much can weaken your immune system, making your body a much easier target for disease. Chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much. Drinking a lot on a single occasion slows your body's ability to ward off infections - even up to 24 hours after getting drunk.



A Weaker Immune System

12 / 16

You might not link a cold with a night of drinking, but there might be a connection. Alcohol puts the brakes on your immune system. Your body can't make the numbers of white blood cells it needs to fight germs. So for 24 hours after drinking, you're more likely to get sick. Long-term, heavy drinkers are much more likely to get illnesses like pneumonia and tuberculosis.

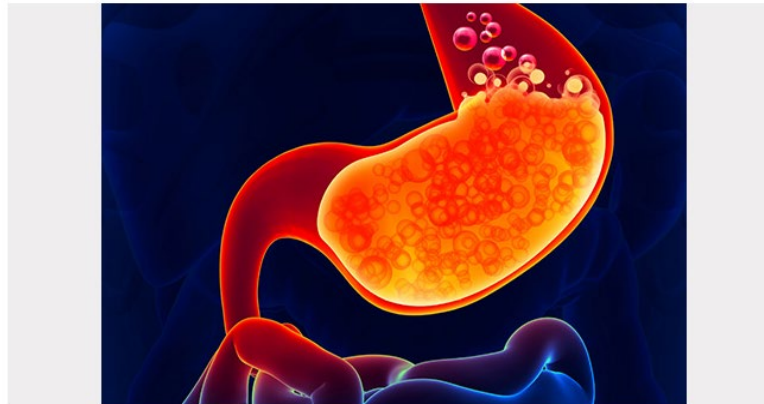
Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health



Does It Help You Sleep?

3 / 16

Alcohol's slow-down effect on your brain can make you drowsy, so you may doze off more easily. But you won't sleep well. Your body processes alcohol throughout the night. Once the effects wear off, it leaves you tossing and turning. You don't get that good REM sleep your body needs to feel restored. And you're more likely to have nightmares and vivid dreams. You'll also probably wake up more often for trips to the bathroom.



More Stomach Acid

4 / 16

Booze irritates the lining of your stomach and makes your digestive juices flow. When enough acid and alcohol build up, you get nauseated and you may throw up. Years of heavy drinking can cause painful sores called ulcers in your stomach. And high levels of stomach juices mean you won't feel hungry. That's one reason long-term drinkers often don't get all the nutrients they need.



Diarrhea and Heartburn

5 / 16

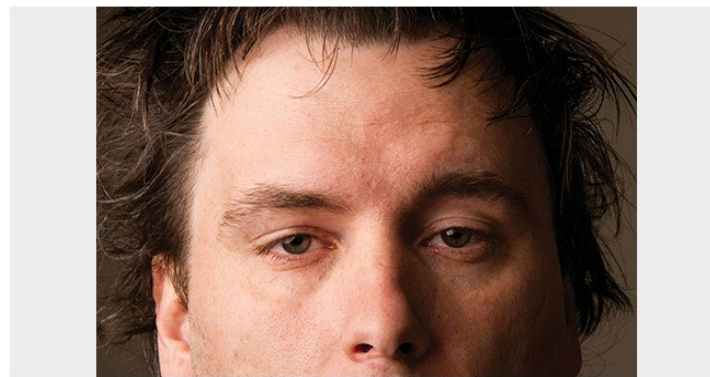
Your small intestine and colon get irritated, too. Alcohol throws off the normal speed that food moves through them. That's why hard drinking can lead to diarrhea, which can turn into a long-term problem. It also makes heartburn more likely – it relaxes the muscle that keeps acid out of your esophagus, the tube that connects your mouth and stomach.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health



Why You Have to Pee ... Again 6 / 16

Your brain gives off a hormone that keeps your kidneys from making too much urine. But when alcohol swings into action, it tells your brain to hold off. That means you have to go more often, which can leave you dehydrated. When you drink heavily for years, that extra workload and the toxic effects of alcohol can wear your kidneys down.



What's a Hangover? 9 / 16

That cotton-mouthed, bleary-eyed morning-after is no accident. Alcohol makes you dehydrated and makes blood vessels in your body and brain expand. That gives you your headache. Your stomach wants to get rid of the toxins and acid that booze churns up, which gives you nausea and vomiting. And because your liver was so busy processing alcohol, it didn't release enough sugar into your blood, bringing on weakness and the shakes.



A Change in Body Temperature 11 / 16

Alcohol widens your blood vessels, making more blood flow to your skin. That makes you blush and feel warm and toasty. But not for long. The heat from that extra blood passes right out of your body, causing your temperature to drop. On the other hand, long-term, heavy drinking boosts your blood pressure. It makes your body release stress hormones that narrow blood vessels, so your heart has to pump harder to push blood through.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health



Hormone Havoc

13 / 16

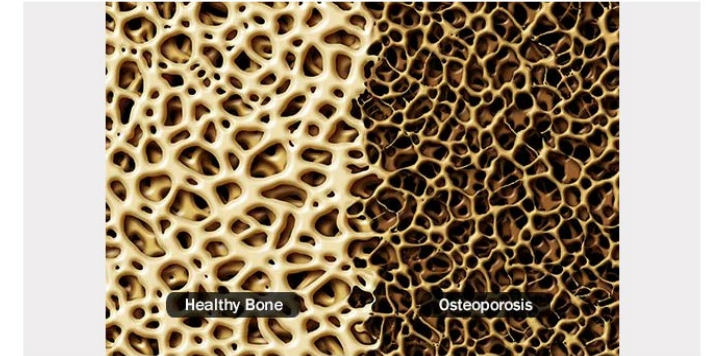
These powerful chemicals manage everything from your sex drive to how fast you digest food. To keep it all going smoothly, you need them in the right balance. But alcohol throws them out of whack. In women, that can knock your periods off cycle and cause problems getting pregnant. In men, it can mean trouble getting an erection, a lower sperm count, shrinking testicles, and breast growth.



Hearing Loss

14 / 16

Alcohol impacts your hearing, but no one's sure exactly how. It could be that it messes with the part of your brain that processes sound. Or it might damage the nerves and tiny hairs in your inner ear that help you hear. However it happens, drinking means you need a sound to be louder so you can hear it. And that can become permanent. Long-term drinkers often have hearing loss.



Thin Bones, Less Muscle

15 / 16

Heavy drinking can throw off your calcium levels. Along with the hormone changes that alcohol triggers, that can keep your body from building new bone. They get thinner and more fragile, a condition called osteoporosis. Booze also limits blood flow to your muscles and gets in the way of the proteins that build them up. Over time, you'll have lower muscle mass and less strength.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

CANCER

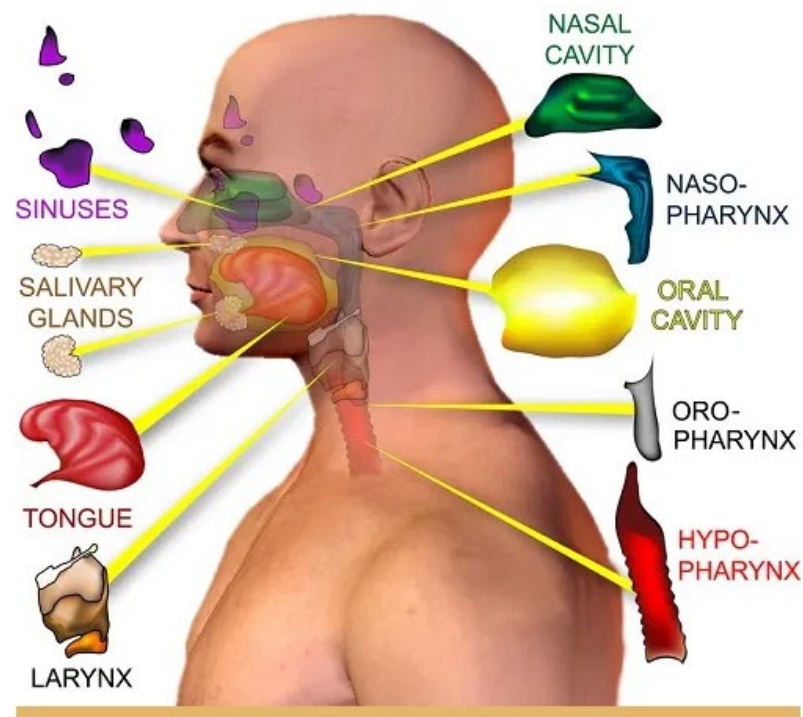
Head and Neck Cancers: Alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for certain head and neck cancers, particularly cancers of the oral cavity (excluding the lips), pharynx (throat), and larynx (voice box). People who consume 50 or more grams of alcohol per day (approximately 3.5 or more drinks per day) have at least a two to three times greater risk of developing these cancers than nondrinkers. Moreover, the risks of these cancers are substantially higher among persons who consume this amount of alcohol and also use tobacco.

Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

CANCER

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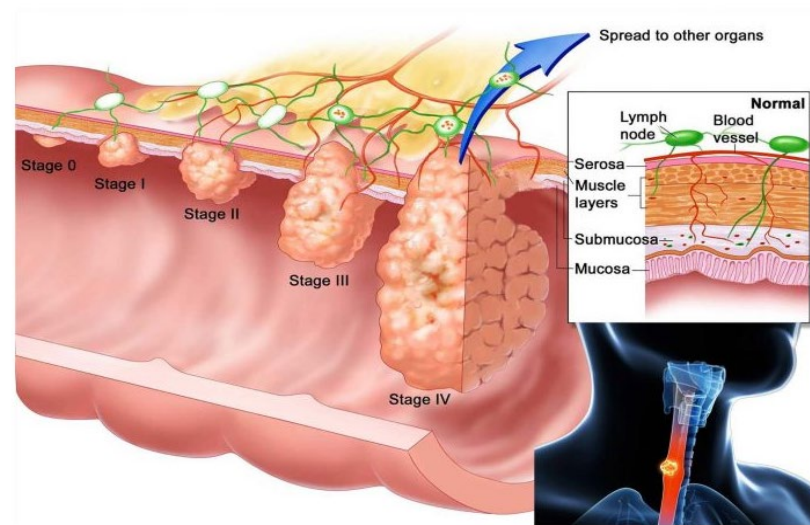
Overview of Head and Neck Cancer



Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

CANCER CONTINUED

Esophageal Cancer: Alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for a particular type of esophageal cancer called esophageal squamous cell carcinoma. In addition, people who inherit a deficiency in an enzyme that metabolizes alcohol have been found to have substantially increased risks of alcohol-related esophageal squamous cell carcinoma.

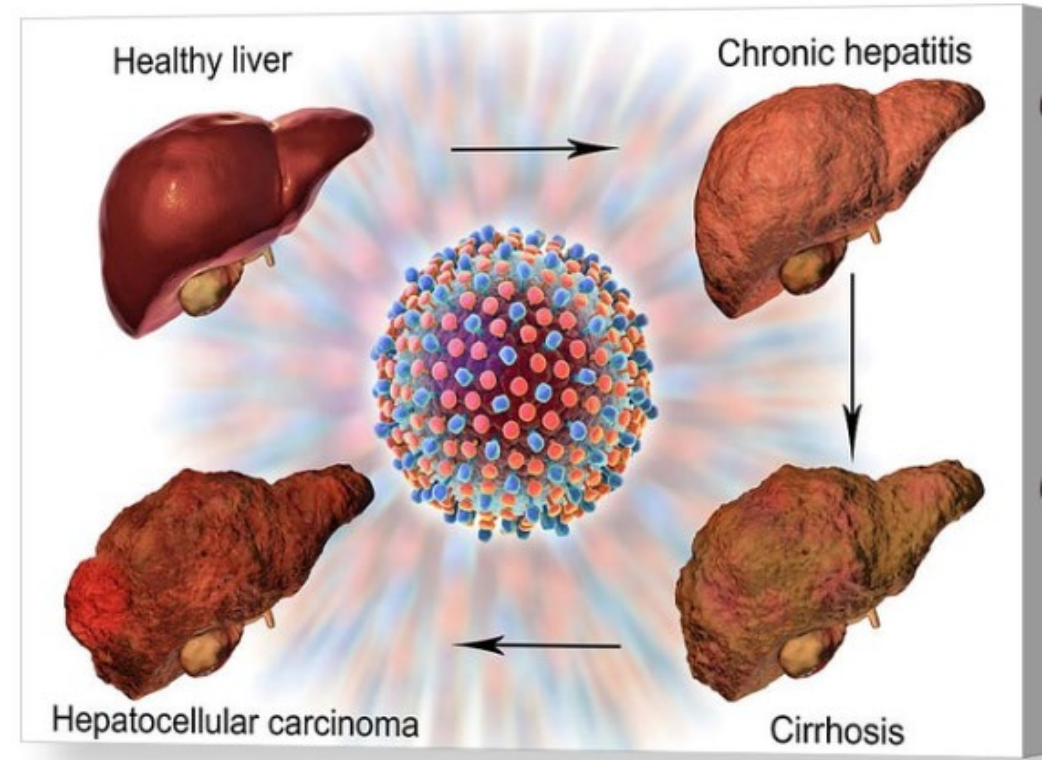


Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

CANCER CONTINUED

Liver Cancer: Alcohol consumption is an independent risk factor for, and a primary cause of, liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma).

Chronic infection with hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus are the other major causes of liver cancer.



Alcohol's Effects on Your Body and Your Health

CANCER CONTINUED

Breast Cancer: More than 100 epidemiologic studies have looked at the association between alcohol consumption and the risk of breast cancer in women. These studies have consistently found an increased risk of breast cancer associated with increasing alcohol intake. The risk of breast cancer was higher across all levels of alcohol intake: for every 10 grams of alcohol consumed per day (slightly less than one drink), researchers observed a small (7 percent) increase in the risk of breast cancer.



Lets start getting healthier now!



There are several healthy stress reduction habits that you can start now which will help your body recover as it gets used to less alcohol consumption.

These strategies may help:

- **Consider your social situation.** Make it clear to your friends and family that you're not drinking alcohol. **Develop a support system of friends and family who can support your recovery.** You may need to distance yourself from friends and social situations that impair your recovery.
- **Develop healthy habits.** For example, **good sleep, regular physical activity, managing stress more effectively and eating well** all can make it easier for you to recover from alcohol use disorder.
- **Do things that don't involve alcohol.** You may find that many of your activities involve drinking. Replace them with **hobbies or activities that are not centered around alcohol.**



Today's Writing Assignment:

Place today's date in our notebook.

There are several healthy stress reduction habits that you can start now which will help your body recover as it gets used to less alcohol consumption.

In your notebook, write down 3 things that you will do this week to improve your health

Examples: go for a walk at lunch each day, limit my time on my cell phone (especially late at night), play with my kids or my pets more, call an old friend just to say hello, pick up an old hobby that I haven't done in awhile)

Once you are done a staff member will come check on you and go over your written material with you.

