



DRUG FACT SHEET

Alcohol

Combining alcohol with other central nervous system depressants like Xanax or painkillers like Vicodin can slow your heartbeat and breathing and may result in death.

Class of drug:	Depressant
Main active ingredient:	Ethanol/Ethyl alcohol, which is made by fermenting or distilling grains, fruit and vegetables. Alcohol is found in beverages like beer, wine, and hard liquor like rum and vodka.
What it looks like:	Liquid, either clear or colored
Street names:	Booze, Juice, Spirits, Brew, Sauce
How it is used:	Taken orally
Duration of high:	Effects of high can last from one to four hours. The effect of alcohol on the body by volume is the same. It is the amount of ethanol consumed that affects a person most, not the type of alcoholic drink.
Withdrawal symptoms:	Restlessness, sweating, tremors, insomnia, anxiety, convulsions, death
Detected in the body:	With a healthy liver, an average person can eliminate one drink (.6 oz of alcohol) per hour. Detection time in urine is one to two days.
Effects:	Physical —small amounts can produce relaxed muscles, headache, nausea; somewhat large amounts can cause slurred speech, double vision; very large amounts can cause respiratory depression, coma and death Mental —small amounts can impair judgment and decrease inhibitions and anxiety; large amounts can produce memory loss Long-term —liver and brain damage, heart disease, cancer, ulcers, pancreatitis



A standard drink is equal to .6 oz of pure alcohol, which is equal to 12 oz of beer, 8 oz of malt liquor, 5 oz of wine and 1.5 oz or a “shot” of 80-proof liquor (e.g. gin, rum, vodka).

Binge drinking is a pattern of drinking that brings a person’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08g/dL or above. This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks, and when women consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours.

U.S. information

In 2013, 18.6 percent of high school students in the United States reported that they drank alcohol for the first time before the age of 13. Approximately 66 percent of students said they had at least one drink of alcohol in their lifetime, compared to 71 percent in 2011 and 81 percent two decades ago.

(U.S. Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013)

Sources: National Household Survey—US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse Warning Network, US Department of Health and Human Services—Center for Disease and Prevention, Illinois Drug Education Alliance