

# Drink Smarter

What you need to know about alcohol:  
A guide to safer drinking.  
WNE Alcohol and Drug Education Services

# Alcohol use at Western New England University

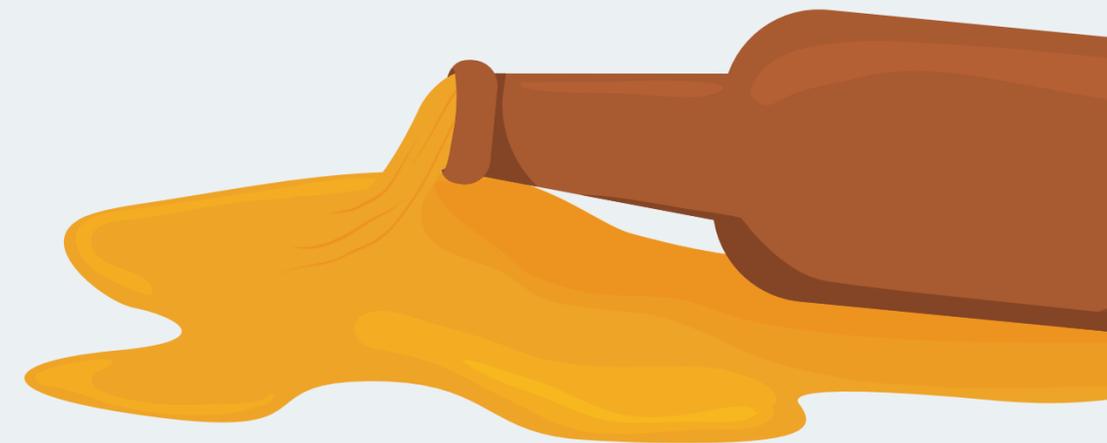
Please remember that underage drinking is illegal and violates the WNEU student code of conduct. This booklet is for educational purposes.

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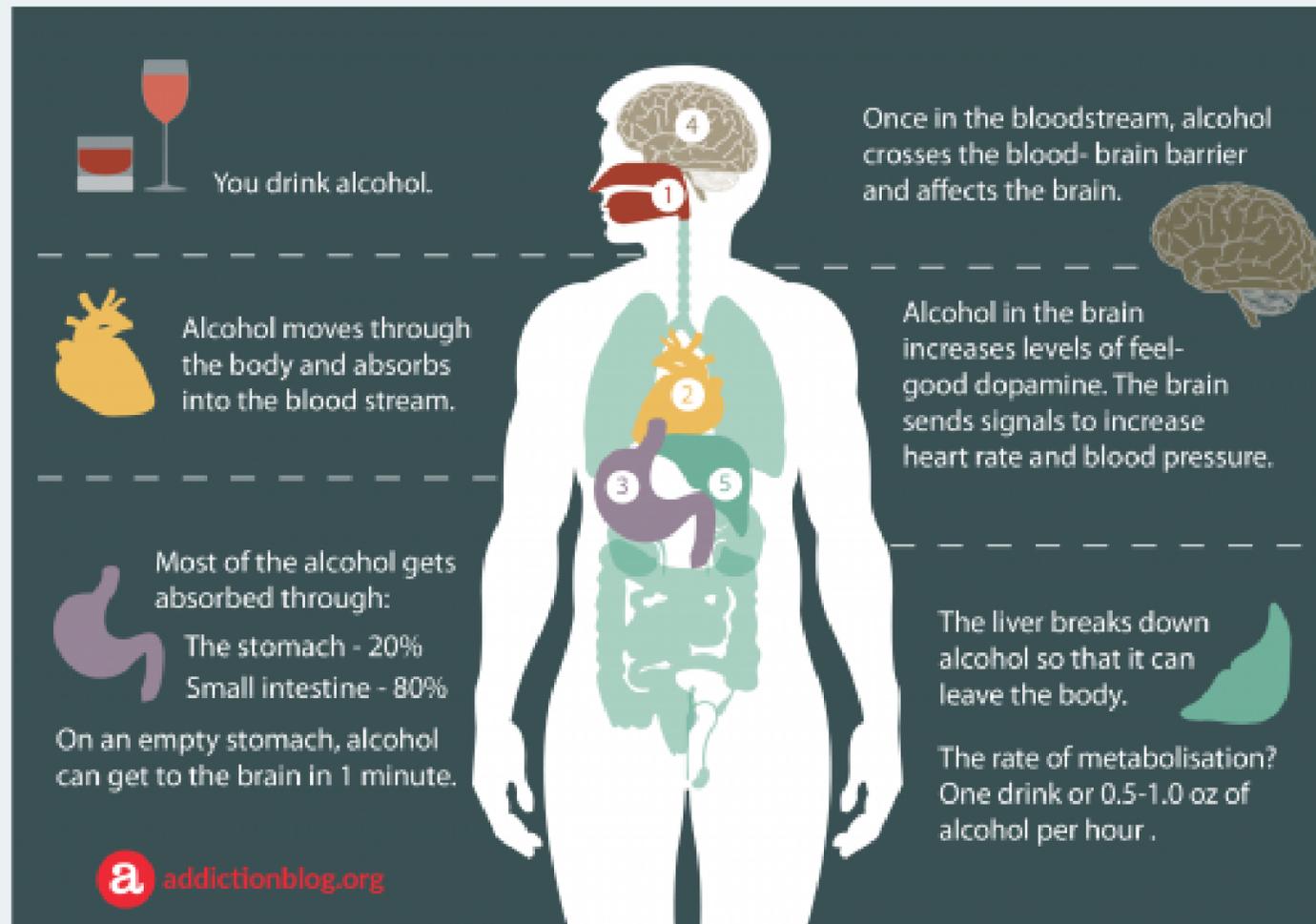
The University alcohol policy prohibits the underage and unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol on University property or participating in any University-sponsored activity. Students at Western New England are responsible for knowing and abiding by both state and University regulations regarding alcohol consumption.

# Whats the buzz?

Western New England University recognizes that many students choose not to drink alcohol and that deciding to drink is a choice that we each make. Whether you plan to consume alcohol or need the information to help a friend who drinks, this guide may be a helpful reference.



# How it works



- Classed as a “sedative-hypnotic” drug, Alcohol slows down the messages that travel between brain and body (the central nervous system.)
- Alcohol is absorbed directly into the bloodstream through the stomach (20%) and small intestine (80%), where a concentration of small blood vessels gives it ready access to the bloodstream.
- Once a drink is swallowed, alcohol reaches the brain in about 5 minutes with immediate effects taking place in 10 minutes.
- Most (90%) of the breaking down, of alcohol, is performed by the liver, with the rest excreted through the lungs (allowing alcohol breath tests), through the kidneys (into urine), and in sweat.

# A shot of information

Binge Drinking - 5 or more alcoholic drinks for males or 4 or more alcoholic drinks for females on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past month. (SAMSA)

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Tolerance - Over time, a person who drinks regularly or heavily may need to consume more alcohol to feel the same effects. This person has developed higher tolerance.

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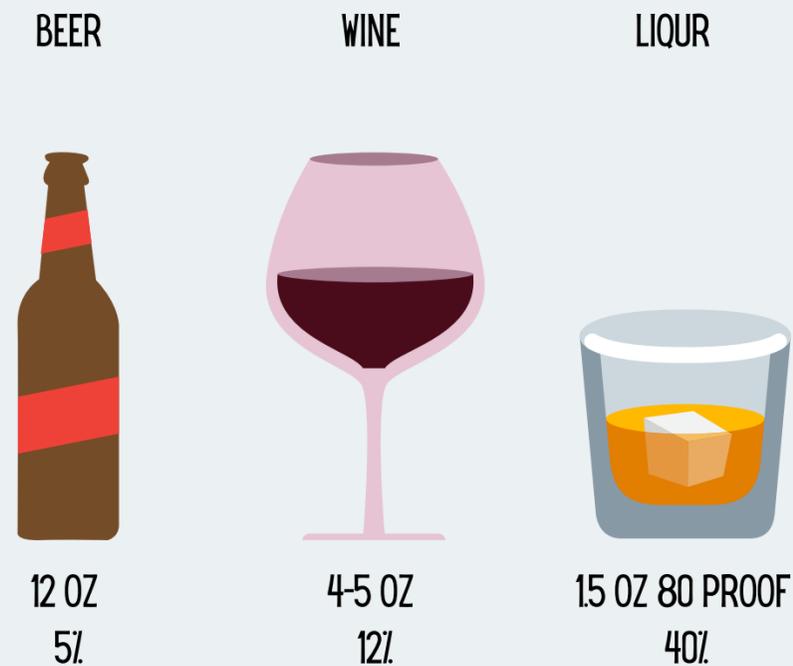
BAC - Blood alcohol content. It is the number of milligrams of alcohol per milliliter in a person's bloodstream at a given time.

ABV - Alcohol by volume, or the percentage of alcohol in a drink.

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Alcohol Myopia - When we exceed a certain intoxication level, we become "myopic" or "short-sighted" in our thinking. Decision-making becomes more impulsive and we are less concerned about the consequences of those decisions.

# Why size matters



**1** STANDARD DRINK IS  
0.6 FLUID OZ. OF 100%  
ALCOHOL

A standard size drink is often classified as the amount of alcohol consumed in one 12 ounce beer, one 4 ounce glass of wine, or a mixed drink containing one 1.5 ounces of hard liquor.

The “standard” drink measure is a simple way to work out how much alcohol you are drinking.

- ✓ On average, the liver can only break down a certain amount of alcohol per hour, which is around one standard drink.

**Although the drinks pictured here are different sizes, each contains approximately the same amount of alcohol and counts as one U.S. standard drink or one alcoholic drink-equivalent.**

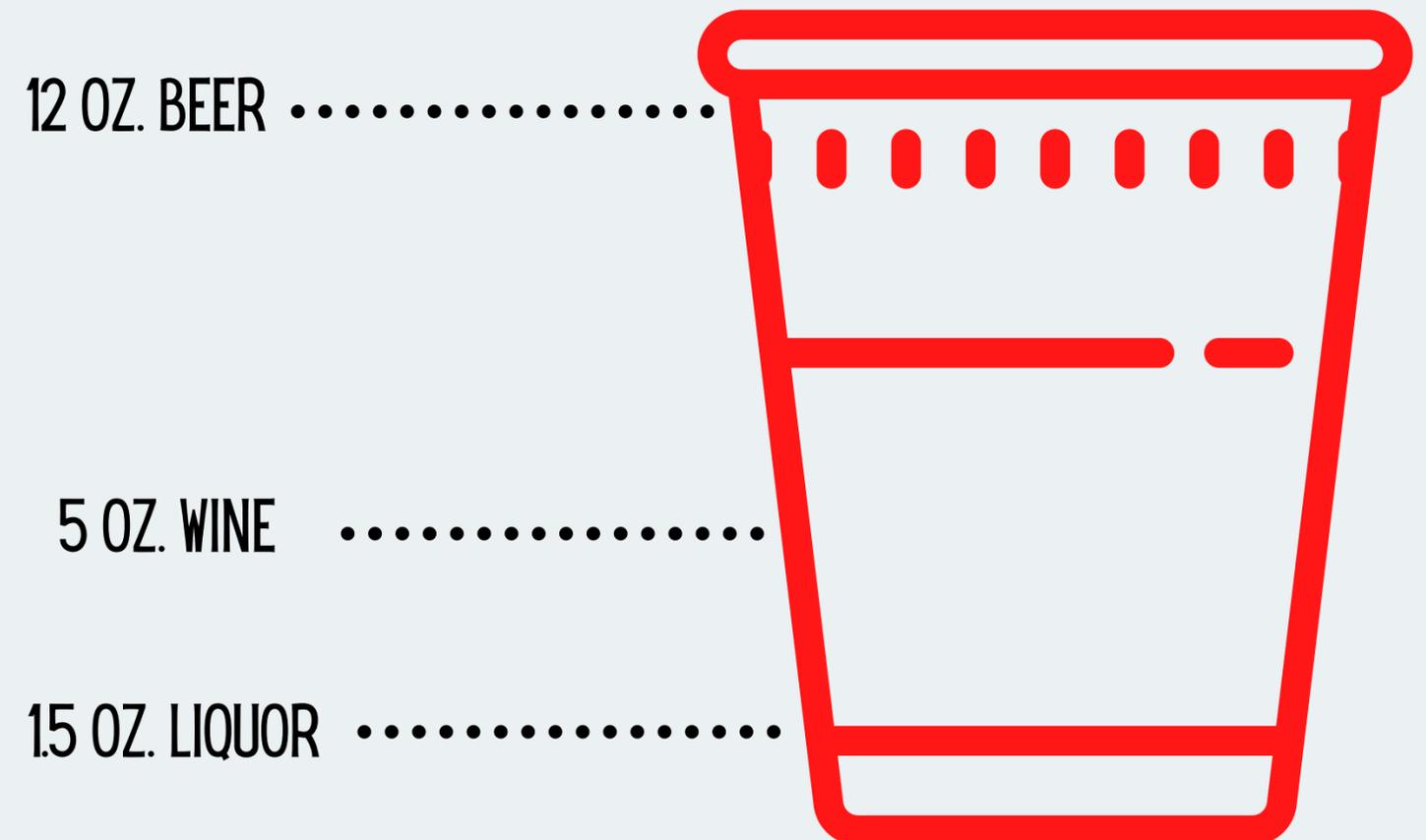
## Portion control

If you drink, your safest option is to always know the type and exact amount of alcohol in your cup.

Use your solo cup! Purely coincidental, the lines on a Solo Cup match closely with appropriate servings for beer, wine, and liquor.

- ✓ Keep in mind the multiple ingredients of mixed drinks make for a harder count. A basic Margarita is the equivalent of 1.7 standard drinks if made with 1.5 ounces of tequila, an ounce of orange liqueur, and half an ounce of lime juice.

## What's in your cup?



# BAC: Blood Alcohol Concentration

BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) is the amount of alcohol in your bloodstream at any given time.

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## Your BAC is determined primarily by:

- How much alcohol you drink
- How fast you drank
- The concentration of alcohol per drink
- How long you have been drinking
- Weight
- Birth sex\*\*
- Other influences include other drugs in the system – including medications, hydration levels, and food in the stomach.

## ✓ Note on Birth Sex

The majority of research on the physiological factors affecting BAC has been conducted with cisgender men and women (i.e., individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth) and research is lacking on alcohol's effects on transgender and intersex people.

The effects of alcohol may vary significantly among cisgender, transgender, and intersex individuals. It is a good idea to consult your own health care provider(s) for information about alcohol's impacts on your mind and body.

# Know your zones: Gold, Blue, and Red

**.02 to .04 Lightheaded - Relaxation, sensation fo warmth, "high", minor impairment.**

**.05 to 07 Buzzed - relaxation, euphoria, lower inhibitions, minor impairment of reasoning and memory, exaggerated emotions.**

**.08 to .10 Legally Impaired - euphoria, fatigue, impairment in balance, speech, vision, reaction time and hearing, judgment, and self-control are impaired.**

**.11 to .15 Drunk - "High" reduced and depressive effects more pronounced, gross motor impairment, judgement and perception severely impaired.**

**.16 to .19 Very Drunk - Strong state of depression, nausea, disorientation, dizziness, increased motor impairment, and blurred vision.**

**.20 to .24 Dazed and Confused - Gross disorientation to time and place, increased nausea and vomiting, severe motor impairment, impervious to pain, blackout liekly.**

**.25 to .30 Stupor - All mental, physical and sensory functions are severely impaired, accidents likely, loss of understanding, may pass in and out of conscioiuness.**

**.31 and up Coma - Severe central nervous system depression, onset of coma, acute alcohol poisoning , death.**



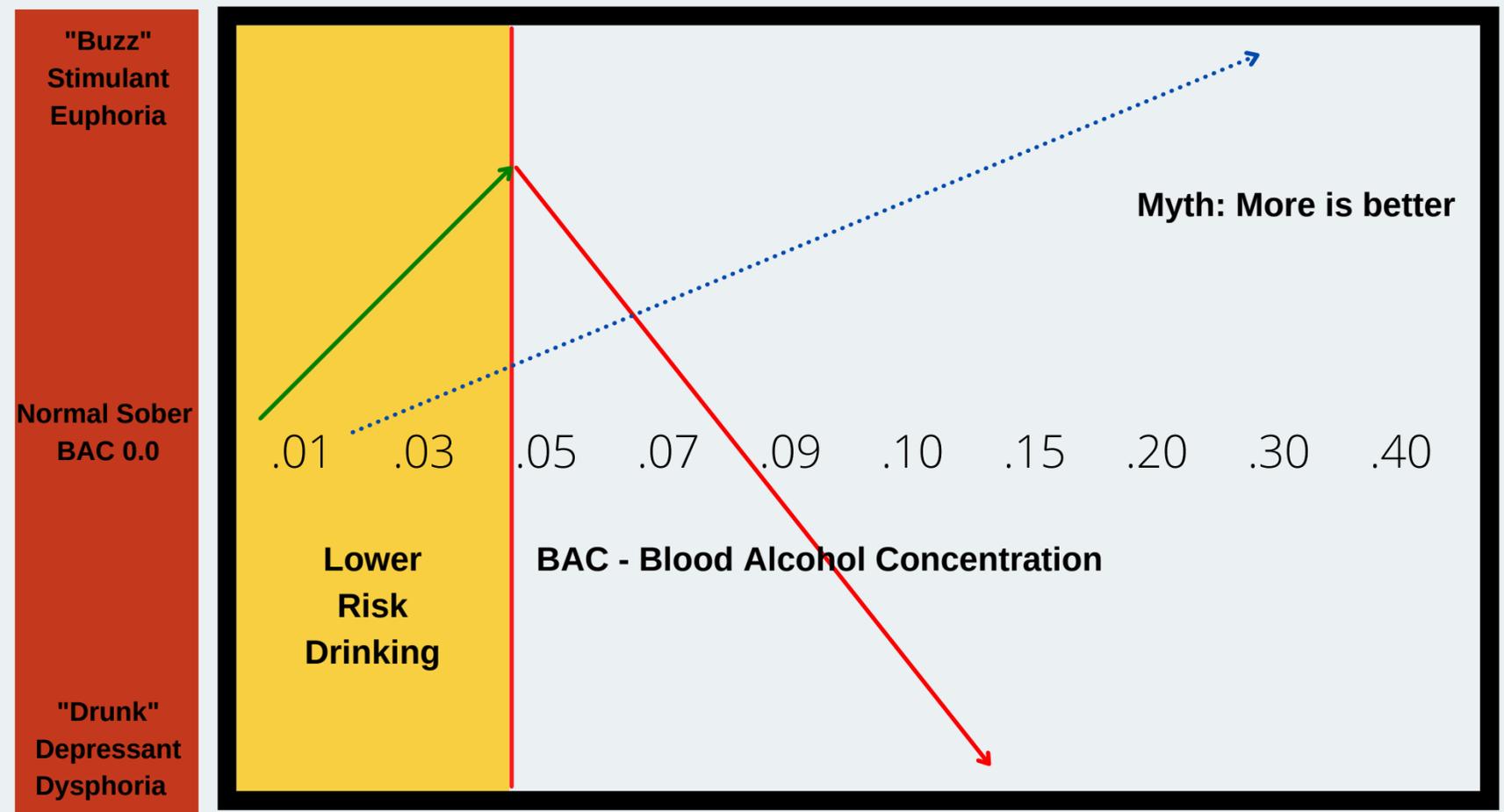
# Keep it ~~Golden~~

If you choose to drink aim to keep your BAC below a .06 or somewhere in the "gold zone."

Many students incorrectly assume the more alcohol they consume, the better they will feel. This is not true. Known as the **Biphasic Response** or "the point of diminishing returns" once you reach a BAC level of .06, negative effects usually begin.

As someone's BAC continues to rise, they are at increased risk for decreased self-control, judgment, and reasoning, memory loss, vomiting, physical injury, and loss of consciousness.

## The Biphasic Response



Addicott MA, Marsh-Richard DM, Mathias CW, Dougherty DM. The biphasic effects of alcohol: comparisons of subjective and objective measures of stimulation, sedation, and physical activity. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res.* 2007 Nov;31(11):1883-90. doi: 10.1111/j.1530-0277.2007.00518.x. PMID: 17949393.

# High-risk drinking

High-risk or **Binge Drinking** is drinking in a way that increases the risk for negative consequences, including physical injury, alcohol poisoning, blacking out, sexual assault, lower grades, problems with relationships, an unsafe environment, and trouble with campus or local law enforcement.

\*Males: Consuming more than 1-2 drinks in an hour or more than 4-5 drinks over the course of an evening event.

\*Females: Consuming more than 1 drink per hour or 3-4 drinks over the course of an evening event.



- Pre-gaming: Pre-gaming involves drinking multiple drinks in a shortened period of time, often before attending an event. Since the body can only metabolize about one standard drink of alcohol per hour, consuming several drinks in a short time can increase BAC to dangerous levels.
- Drinking Games: Drinking Games encourage alcohol consumption in large quantities over a short period of time as part of the rules of the game. These games also increase the likelihood that the drinker will lose track of how much alcohol has been consumed or drink more than intended

# Blackouts

A Blackout is a period of alcohol-induced amnesia during which an intoxicated person actively engages in behaviors like walking or talking but doesn't remember doing so.

Blackouts tend to begin at blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of about 0.16 percent (nearly twice the legal driving limit) and higher.

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It may be hard to tell when someone is experiencing a blackout because they are likely to conduct themselves normally. However, there are some indications that a person may be experiencing a blackout.

## Signs of a blackout

- The person is easily distracted.
- They repeat themselves often during conversation.
- The individual continually forgets where they are or what they were doing.
- They are unable to hold the thread of a conversation.
- They appear unconcerned about the thoughts or feelings of those around them.
- They choose to participate in risky behaviors that they may not perform when sober.
- The person has consumed a lot of alcohol in a short period of time, or they have been drinking without eating or drinking water.

# C.U.P.S.

On-campus call Public Safety: 413-782-1411  
Off-campus, call 911!

## While waiting for emergency personnel to arrive:

- Gently turn the intoxicated person on their side and maintain that position by placing a pillow in the small of the person's back. This is important to prevent aspiration (choking) should the person vomit.
- NEVER put a drunk person to bed alone to "sleep it off." Always stay with them to monitor their condition.
- Stay with the person until medical help arrives.

✓ **Don't wait—if you think there may be a medical issue, your number one priority should always be to maintain the safety of our community members. Call Public Safety 413-782-1411 or 911.**

An individual who exhibits any of the following signs may be experiencing alcohol poisoning:



**COLD, CLAMMY SKIN**



**UNRESPONSIVE**



**PUKING**



**SLOW BREATHING**

# Party Smarter

While consuming alcohol is risky behavior, here are some tips that can make consuming alcohol safer.



- Have a plan about when, where, and how you will consume alcohol. Part of your plan should include how you will get home.
- Pace. Limit high-risk drinking, such as shots, jungle juice, and drinking games.
- Eat something (before, during, and after).
- Drink water/ alternate with non-alcoholic drinks.
- Measure your drinks.
- Know your limits/BAC.
- Do not combine with other drugs/medications.
- Do not mix with caffeinated/energy drinks.
- Never leave your drink alone.
- Space: Take a break.

# Make a change

If you're considering changing your drinking, it is always helpful to have goals and a plan in mind. WNE encourages you to reflect on those goals and ask yourself why you want to reach them, and how you plan to do it.

Three steps I will take to manage/change my drinking:  
example: Eat before I drink, pace myself, measure my drinks

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When will I start?

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My reasons for making these changes:

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Who can help me?

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Roadblocks and how I will manage them:

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# Red Flags

The following signs may indicate that someone is at risk for Alcohol Use Disorder:

- Sets limits but cannot stick to them
- Makes promises about drinking, but breaks those promises
- Lies or tries to hide drinking
- Forgets or denies events that happened when drunk
- Behaves very differently when intoxicated compared to when sober



- Feels guilt, embarrassment, or remorse about drinking
- A reduced effect from the same amount of alcohol (a.k.a. high tolerance)
- Avoids social functions without alcohol
- Uses alcohol in unsafe situations (e.g. while driving)
- Experiences withdrawal symptoms when not drinking (e.g. nausea, sweat, shakes)

# Drinking Concerns?

What to do if you are concerned about your drinking or the drinking of someone else?

## Others

You should have a private conversation with the person when they are sober about your concerns in a non-confrontational, nonaccusatory manner. Be specific about why are you worried about the person.

## You

Whether you are concerned about your pattern of drinking, motivation for drinking, or consequences from drinking, the same resources for helping someone else are available to help you.

- Schedule a confidential consultation with a counselor at WNE 413- 782-1222.
- Check-in with WNE Alcohol and Drug Education Services for confidential, non-judgmental support and resources: 413-782-1360.
- Taken an online screening available on the WNE Alcohol and Drug Education Services Page.
  - Echeckup to go
- Connect with someone you trust and express your concerns with them!

# Resources

**Counseling Center** - Campus Center, Room 249. Phone: 413-782-1221

**Health Services** -CSP.  
Phone: 235 413-782-1211/ After Hours 413-51-4055.

**Meaghan E Decker LICSW**  
meaghan.decker@wne.edu

**WNE Public Safety**  
413-782-1441

# There's an App for that

- **YourBAC** - Estimate your Blood Alcohol Concentration (B.A.C.) and improve your understanding of B.A.C. by estimating how long it takes until it reaches 0.000.
- **DrinkControl** - Tracks and converts your alcohol intake quantities, into the standard units of alcohol and lets you know when you are going over the limits (set by moderate drinking guidelines) as well as how much you have spent on drinks and calories you consumed from alcohol.
- **MyLimit** - Easily track your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) in real-time & help manage alcohol use over time.
- **LastCall** - Track your alcohol intake—and if you are at risk of exceeding your legal limit.

# Resources Cont.

**Massachusetts Substance Abuse Hotline:**

800.327.5050

**WESTERN MASS INTERGROUP OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

<https://westernmassaa.org/>

413-532-2111

**SMART Recovery**

<https://www.smartrecovery.org/>

**Yoga of 12 Steps**

y12sr.com

**Collegiate Recovery Resources**

<http://www.collegiaterecoveryresources.org/>

**Phoenix Multisport**

[thephoenix.org/](http://thephoenix.org/)

**Learn to Cope**

[learn2cope.org](http://learn2cope.org)

**Al-Anon**

[al-anon.org/](http://al-anon.org/)