



IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOL...

Here's what
you should know
about how it
affects you and the
medicines you take.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ALCOHOL AND MEDICINES.

You may be unaware of how alcohol affects your body and some of the over-the-counter and prescription medicines you may take.

These effects can vary depending on how much alcohol you drink and which medicine you take. With certain medicines, you may need to avoid drinking alcohol altogether.

To help you understand this important issue, take some time to read this booklet. It provides helpful information about alcohol as well as how it affects your body and some of the most commonly used medicines. If you have any additional questions, talk with your doctor or other healthcare professional.



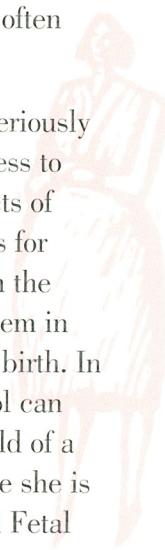
ALCOHOL: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT CAN DO.

Alcohol is a chemical that acts like a drug in the body. It can affect important organs and systems of the body, such as the brain and nervous system, the

stomach and digestive system, the liver, and more. The seriousness of its effects depends on how much and how often you drink alcohol.

The government takes alcohol seriously enough that it legally limits access to adults. This is because the effects of alcohol are especially dangerous for children. Alcohol interferes with the development of the nervous system in the growing child—even before birth. In fact, it is now known that alcohol can severely damage the unborn child of a woman who abuses alcohol while she is pregnant, causing what is called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Alcohol should be used responsibly and cautiously by adults because of the many effects it can have on the body. Special caution should be taken by individuals with chronic diseases and those taking medicines.



WHAT EFFECTS ALCOHOL CAN HAVE ON YOUR BODY.

Alcohol has very different effects on different people. It can even affect the same person differently at different



times. Four factors determine the effects of alcohol:

- How much you drink
- How much you weigh
- How much food you have eaten
- Your drinking habits

The central nervous system and brain

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. Though at low blood levels you will feel stimulated and less inhibited, alcohol acts much like depressants, such as sedative drugs.

Even moderate amounts of alcohol affect the brain. This is why you should not drink alcohol when you plan to drive a car or operate machinery.

Alcohol and the stomach

Alcohol irritates the lining of the esophagus (food pipe) and the stomach. It can cause gastritis, an inflammation of the stomach that can lead to gastrointestinal bleeding.

These effects of a moderate amount of alcohol are reversible if you stop drinking alcohol. If you are a heavy drinker, the risk for damage is much greater—tearing of the stomach lining, ulceration, and more severe bleeding can result.

Alcohol and the liver

Alcohol can cause even more problems when used excessively. Chronic use of excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to serious complications in the liver, the organ where alcohol is processed.

Cirrhosis and alcoholic hepatitis are the two most serious consequences in the liver; in fact, chronic excessive alcohol consumption is the single leading cause of illness and death from liver disease in the U.S.

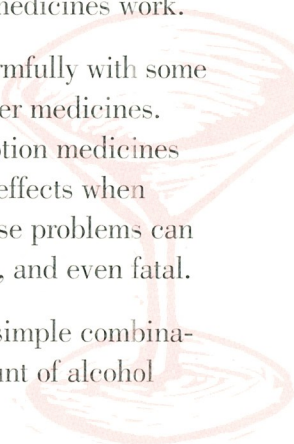


WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ALCOHOL AND MEDICINES.

Over-the-counter and prescription medicines can give you relief and help you stay healthier, as long as you take them correctly. Drinking alcohol can sometimes affect how other medicines work.

Alcohol can interact harmfully with some common over-the-counter medicines. And about 100 prescription medicines can produce unwanted effects when taken with alcohol. These problems can be minor or very severe, and even fatal.

Sometimes it's just the simple combination of a moderate amount of alcohol



and recommended doses of medicines that can cause a bad effect. In other cases, it's excessive amounts of alcohol consumed on a regular basis combined with excessive doses of medication that cause a bad reaction.

Factors that need to be considered about alcohol and your medicines:

- Specific medicine or medicines taken
- Amount of medicine taken
- Amount of alcohol consumed
- Time of drinking in relation to time of taking medicine
- How the particular medicine is broken down by your body



ALCOHOL AND OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN RELIEVERS.

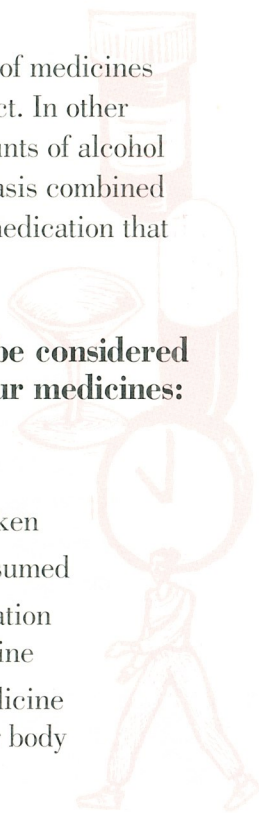
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has urged manufacturers to include an alcohol warning on all over-the-counter pain relievers. This includes acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®), ketoprofen (Actron® and Orudis® KT™), and naproxen sodium (Aleve®).

Tylenol was the first of the over-the-counter pain relievers to comply voluntarily by adding the following to its label: "If you generally consume three or more alcohol-containing drinks per day, you should consult your physician for advice on when and how you should take Tylenol® and other pain relievers." In addition, when Aleve®, Orudis® KT™, and Actron®, as well as Tylenol® Extended Relief, became available, their labeling included an alcohol warning.

How alcohol interacts with NSAIDs

NSAIDs are NonSteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs—a class of pain relievers that includes aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil®), ketoprofen (Orudis® KT™ and Actron®), and naproxen sodium (Aleve®). NSAIDs to varying degrees can cause serious gastrointestinal (stomach) ulceration and bleeding. In addition, alcohol by itself is a stomach irritant.

If you take any of these pain relievers and drink alcohol, the risk of stomach irritation and bleeding can be increased. The more



you drink and the more medicine you take, the greater the problem can be. So talk to your doctor about which pain reliever is right for you.

Alcohol and Tylenol

You can be reassured that Tylenol does not cause NSAID-related gastrointestinal ulcerating or bleeding. *And if you're an occasional, moderate drinker, you can use Tylenol (acetaminophen) with confidence.* This has been supported by over 30 years of use. It is important that you read the label and use the product as directed. Do not exceed the recommended dose on the package label.

Chronic heavy alcohol abusers may be at increased risk of liver toxicity from excessive acetaminophen use, although reports of this event are rare. Reports almost invariably involve cases of severe chronic alcoholics, and the dosages of acetaminophen most often exceed recommended doses and often involve substantial overdose. Individuals who consume large amounts of alcohol should not exceed recommended doses of acetaminophen.

The charts on the following two pages include some of the most commonly used over-the-counter and prescription

medicines and how they react when used with alcohol. Remember that your physician or healthcare professional is the best source of information. So talk to your doctor or healthcare professional if you have any questions.



HOW OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES CAN REACT WITH ALCOHOL.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES	CAN CAUSE
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NSAID Pain Relievers, ie, aspirin, Advil®, Aleve®, Actron®, Orudis® KT™	To varying degrees stomach and intestinal bleeding, bleeding ulcers
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Non-NSAID Pain Relievers, ie, Tylenol®	Chronic alcohol abuse and excessive acetaminophen use have been associated with liver complications
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Antihistamines, ie, Benadryl®	Greater sedative effect, drowsiness, confusion
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HOW PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES CAN REACT WITH ALCOHOL.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES CAN CAUSE

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| Narcotic Pain Medicines,
ie, Codeine,
Darvon® | Greater sedative effect, drowsiness, confusion |
| Antiarthritics,
ie, Naprosyn®,
Motrin® | Stomach and intestinal bleeding, bleeding ulcers |
| Antianxiety/Sedatives,
ie, Valium®,
Barbiturates | Greater sedative effect, drowsiness, confusion |
| Antidepressants,
ie, Prozac®,
Elavil®, MAO inhibitors | Greater sedative effect, drowsiness, confusion, other nervous system effects |
| Oral Antidiabetics,
ie, Micronase® | Altered control of blood sugar, most often hypoglycemia, facial flushing, and headache |
| Anti-infectives,
ie, Flagyl® | Facial flushing, headache, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal distress |



TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON ALCOHOL AND MEDICINES.

If you have any questions about alcohol and medicines, your doctor or healthcare professional is your best source of advice.

For additional information on how alcohol affects you and medicines you take, please contact:

American Medical Association (AMA)
 Healthcare Education Products
 515 North State Street
 Chicago, IL 60610
<http://www.ama-assn.org>

