

Alcohol Poisoning

Did you know . . .

- One drink is defined as 12oz beer, one 4oz glass of wine, one 10oz wine cooler or 1 1/2 oz of 80 proof hard alcohol.
- Alcohol is a psychoactive drug that changes brain chemistry.
- Alcohol is lethal in high doses.
- Deaths from alcohol overdoses occur about as often as deaths from other drugs.
- Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant that can "turn off" these vital brain areas, resulting first in coma, then in DEATH.
- Getting "sick" from alcohol is not from drinking too much or drinking on an empty stomach.
- Poison control cells in the brain detect danger - too much alcohol. A signal is then sent to your stomach to vomit.
- It takes anywhere from 30-90 minutes after you stop drinking before you reach your highest level of intoxication.



These are symptoms of an overdose reaction:

- cold, clammy pale or bluish skin
- vomiting
- passing out, difficult to awaken
- slow shallow breathing (8 breaths a minute or less)

"Passing out" from alcohol intoxication could lead to death in 2 ways:

1. You may fall into a deep sleep, vomit, and choke on it because you are too intoxicated to wake up.
2. You fall asleep and never wake up because the alcohol concentration in your brain is so high that your life functions are so depressed that they stop functioning and so do you.

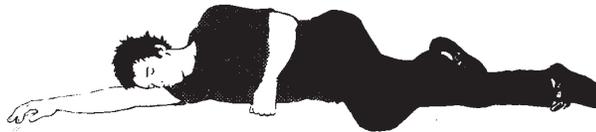
What to do when someone is intoxicated . . .

- Continually monitor the person.
- Check their breathing, waking them often to be sure they are not unconscious.
- A drunk person should not be put in charge of another drunk person.
- Do not exercise the person.
- Do not allow the person to drive a car or ride a bike.
- Do not give the person food, liquid, medicines or drugs to sober them up.
- Do not give the person a cold shower, the shock of the cold could cause unconsciousness.
- Do not let a person who has been drinking heavily "sleep it off".
- If they fall asleep, wake them up.
- If they do not respond, call 911 to tell them you need an ambulance for a possible overdose.
- Place the intoxicated person on their side as shown below.

Raise the persons arm closest to you straight above the head.
Straighten the leg closest to you. **Bend** the other leg at the knee and bring the other arm across the chest.



Gently roll the person towards you. **Guard** the head.



Tilt the head to maintain airway. **Tuck** nearest hand under the cheek to help maintain head tilt.



The only thing that can sober a drunk is time!!



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit