



## RISKS OF BINGE DRINKING

Binge drinking is a term referring to the heavy consumption of alcohol over a short period of time. More specifically, binge drinking is the consumption of five or more drinks in a row by a man, or four or more drinks in a row by a woman. Heavy binge drinking includes three or more such episodes in two weeks.

Many people don't think about the negative side of drinking, but binge drinking has serious risks associated with it, some of which are explained below.

### *Alcohol Poisoning*

Alcohol poisoning is a life-threatening consequence of binge drinking because it affects the body's involuntary reflexes such as breathing and the gag reflex. When the gag reflex isn't properly functioning, you run the risk of choking to death on your vomit.

Some warning signs of alcohol poisoning include:

- inability to be awakened
- vomiting
- slow or irregular breathing
- extreme confusion
- low body temperature
- extremely pale skin

### *Impaired Judgment*

Binge drinking impairs your judgment, making you more likely to take risks. For example, you may drive drunk or practice unprotected sex. Drinking and driving is not only illegal, it is also extremely dangerous because alcohol slows your reaction time and impairs judgment and coordination. If you get behind the wheel after a few drinks, you run the risk of injuring yourself and others. Having unprotected sex is another type of risk you may take when under the influence of alcohol. This puts you at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or may result in an unplanned pregnancy.

### *Physical Health*

Binge drinkers are more likely to be overweight than individuals who drink in moderation. Just one regular beer contains about 150 calories, which adds up quickly if you are drinking four or five beers a night.

### *Mental Health*

Binge drinking has negative effects on your brain. Teenagers who binge drink often notice problems with memory, learning and other brain functions compared to their peers. This can result in poor academic performance.

**DON'T FORGET TO STRETCH!**