

## Alcohol and your Brain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXjANz9r5F0>

Transcript:

It may be legal but it is still a drug. Be safe, be sensible, and know your limit.

Alcohol is a drug to. Think before you drink. Your body belongs to you.

The purpose of this presentation is to help you understand the impact that alcohol has on your brain and damage it can do. Our goal is to provide you with information which will enable you to make informed choices in relation to safe alcohol consumption.

Did you know? Healthy people metabolise alcohol at a fairly consistent rate, as a rule of thumb a person will eliminate one standard drink or 10 millilitres per hour. And remember it's not how many drinks one had, but how much of an alcohol you consume.

Several factors influence this rate including gender, age, height, weight, general health, the presence of food in the stomach, the concentration of alcohol in the drink and prescription or illicit drugs taken by the person.

It's the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) which is the key to why are we affected by alcohol.

Basically your blood alcohol concentration is the relationship between the total amount of alcohol in your system divided by total body water, because alcohol is dissolved and diluted water.

So that's also why drinking lots of water with any alcohol consumption is a really good thing.

The BAC and the effects of alcohol go up when the body is taking in alcohol faster than you can metabolise it. For example if you binge drink and you consume 750 ml bottle of rum or three bottles of wine, that's around 26 standard drinks between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m., your body will need until sometime around 6 p.m., the next day to process and get rid of the alcohol and that is why driving or operating an equipment the next day is not only illegal but just crazy, particularly when you consider what this is doing to your brains.

Let me explain, alcohol enters the body and ends up in the stomach, at which point about 20 percent is absorbed immediately and the other 80 percent is absorbed in the small intestine, the heart then pumps the absorbed alcohol to every part of the body including the central nervous system, which consist of the brain and spinal cord and it gets to the brain really fast, so that why even after just one drink you can feel light-headed or relaxed. Alcohol acts primarily on the nerve cells within the brain and interferes with communication between nerve cells and all other cells, slowing everything down and that's why when we drink even a little we experience the effects of alcohol on our emotions, judgment, balance, memory, speech and anger levels, just to name a few.

Did you know that your brain is still developing until you are around 20 to 25, so we need to be really careful because alcohol can do some irreversible damage to various parts of our brain?

For example, drinking affects the cerebral cortex, which controls our senses and inhibitory centres, which is why when you drink you become more talkative, more self-confident and less socially inhibited. It also control our thought processes, so alcohol affects our ability to make good judgement or think clearly. The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions and using self-control, so when alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain you may find it hard to control emotions and urges and you may act without thinking and even sometimes become violent or act completely out of character. Does this sound familiar?

The cerebellum is important for coordination, thinking and being aware, so again you may have trouble with the skills when alcohol affects the cerebellum. That's why people affected by alcohol sometime can't walk properly or lose their balance and fall.

The hippocampus is the part of the brain where memories are made, so when alcohol reaches the hippocampus you might have trouble remembering something what you just heard or even worse have a black-out and not be able to remember what you did last night. If alcohol damages the hippocampus you may find it hard to learn or remember things in the future.

The hypothalamus is the small part of your brain that does an amazing number of the body's housekeeping chores. After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst and the urge to urinate increases, while body temperature and heart rate decreases.

And finally, the medulla controls the body automatic functions, such as you heartbeat. It also keeps the body at the right temperature because alcohol chills the body. Drinking a lot of alcohol outdoors in cold weather can cause a person's body temperature to fall below normal. This dangerous condition is called hypothermia.

Your body belongs to you, get the facts.

Alcohol is unsafe for the developing brain. Alcohol can damage your brain forever.

The long-term functioning and the health of your brain depends on the choices you make today.

You're responsible attitude toward the alcohol can have a positive influence on your friends and your family.

Your body belongs to you, take care of it, it's the only one you have.

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For more information or to download the Australian alcohol guidelines, please visit [www.alcohol.gov.au](http://www.alcohol.gov.au)