

Moderation is Key

Immediate and Long-Term Effects of Alcohol

Moderate use of alcohol can be a healthy, positive practice, potentially improving your cardiovascular functions and general wellness. However, prolonged excess consumption can be one of the most dangerous things a person can do to themselves.

Moderation is at the heart of the general short-term and long-term effects of alcohol. Too much drinking, either during a single event or over a prolonged period of time, can be dangerous and even deadly. Abuse or excess consumption of alcohol can lead to cognitive issues, cancer, liver damage and other debilitating conditions.

Short-term Effects

Most adults will experience no significant downside from one or two servings of alcohol a day. A serving is a four-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce can of beer, or a 1.5-ounce shot of a distilled spirit. This level of consumption sometimes even decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease and dementia in certain people.

But the short-term effects of any alcohol intake above that safe level (depending on your weight and whether you drink on an empty stomach) generally leads to a slowdown in brain activity, gastrointestinal issues and impaired judgment that can have social, physical and even legal circumstances.

Long-term Effects

Prolonged overconsumption of alcohol is proven to cause a host of significant ailments, including cirrhosis, pancreatitis and cardiac arrhythmias. In addition, long-term alcohol abuse causes death of brain cells, which can lead to brain disorders and a lowered level of mental or physical function.

Tolerance is the long-term effect of alcohol in which the body becomes accustomed to higher and higher doses of alcohol after a long period of overconsumption, which eliminates the short-term effects of alcohol that might otherwise prevent dependence or addiction in some people.

Over time, drinking too much can also:

- Weaken your immune system.
- Cause ulcers and organ damage.
- Increase your blood pressure.
- Decrease male sperm production.

If you have any symptoms like the ones mentioned here, you might want to consider what role your alcohol intake may have on your health. Your primary care physician can guide you on whether your consumption is an issue, and for any additional doubts you may have about these issues, Best Doctors can solve the uncertainty.

Our expansive network of experts and the straightforward, simple explanations they provide will give you peace of mind as you begin the investigation into what your symptoms represent. Our detailed, comprehensive expert opinions can help point you toward a moderate lifestyle that will improve your health and longevity.

For more information, call 866.904.0910 or visit members.bestdoctors.com.