

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE  
ABUSING ALCOHOL, CONTACT A GATEWAY  
TREATMENT CENTER NEAR YOU.

## ILLINOIS

Aurora

Bloomington

Carbondale

Caseyville

Chicago Northwest

Chicago River North

Chicago West

Lake Villa

Pekin

Springfield

Swansea

Get the Facts on:

# Alcohol

**24-Hour Helpline**  
**877-505-HOPE (4673)**  
**RecoverGateway.org**

MORE WAYS TO STAY INFORMED



**Real Answers for Lasting Recovery**

Source: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center  
for Substance Abuse Prevention



**Real Answers for Lasting Recovery**

# ALCOHOL

Also known as: *Booze, Sauce, Brews, Brewskis, Hooch, Hard Stuff, Juice*

It can be hard to tell if someone has been drinking alcohol. If someone shows one or more of the following warning signs, they may have a problem with alcohol.

## KNOW THE SIGNS

- Lying about how much alcohol he or she is using
- Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun
- Having frequent hangovers
- Feeling run-down, depressed, or even suicidal
- Having "blackouts"--forgetting what he or she did while drinking

## YOUR BRAIN

Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses and even blackouts.

## YOUR BODY

Alcohol can damage every organ in your body. It is absorbed directly into your bloodstream and can increase your risk for a variety of life-threatening diseases, including cancer.

## SELF-CONTROL

Alcohol depresses your central nervous system, lowers your inhibitions and impairs your judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors, such as driving when you shouldn't, or having unprotected sex.

## IT CAN KILL YOU

Drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time or very rapidly can cause alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma or even death. Driving and drinking also can be deadly. In 2003, 31% of drivers age 15 to 20 who died in traffic accidents had been drinking alcohol.

## KNOW THE LAW

It is illegal to buy or possess alcohol if you are under age 21.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

- **One drink can make you fail a breath test.** In some states, people under age 21 can lose their driver's license, be subject to a heavy fine or have their car permanently taken away.
- **Alcohol is a drug.** Mixing it with any other drug can be extremely dangerous. Alcohol and acetaminophen--a common ingredient in OTC pain and fever reducers--can damage your liver. Alcohol mixed with other drugs can cause nausea, vomiting, fainting, heart problems and difficulty breathing. Mixing alcohol and drugs also can lead to coma and death.
- **Alcohol is a depressant**, or downer, because it reduces brain activity. If you are depressed before you start drinking, alcohol can make you feel worse.
- Beer and wine are not "safer" than liquor. One 12-ounce bottle of beer or a 5-ounce glass of wine (about a half-cup) has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. **Alcohol can make you drunk and cause you problems no matter how you consume it.**

## TEENS AND ALCOHOL

*Teens' brains and bodies are still developing; alcohol use can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism. People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.*

*"Binge" drinking means having five or more drinks on one occasion. Studies show that more than 35% of adults with an alcohol problem developed symptoms--such as binge drinking--by age 19.*