

**Montclair State University**  
**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

# **Alcohol Poisoning**

## *How to Help an Intoxicated Friend*

### *Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning*

- Unconscious or semi-consciousness and cannot be awakened.
- There is no response to pinching the skin or other physical stimuli (gentle shaking, etc.)
- The person vomits while passed out and does not wake up during or after.
- The person has seizures.
- Slow respiration (breaths) of eight or less per minute or lapses between breaths of more than eight seconds.
- Irregular breathing.
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin -especially around the lips and nose. In the event of alcohol poisoning, these signs and symptoms will most likely be accompanied by a strong odor of alcohol. While these are obvious signs of alcohol poisoning, the list is certainly not all inclusive.

### *What Can You Do to Help?*

- Call 911 immediately Do what you would do in any medical emergency--call immediately.
- While waiting for 911 emergency transport, gently turn the intoxicated person on his/her side and maintain that position by placing a pillow in the small of the person's back. This is important to prevent aspiration (choking) should the person vomit.
- Stay with the person until medical help arrives.
- If a person appears to be "sleeping it off" it is important to realize that even though a person may be semi-conscious, alcohol already in the

- stomach may continue to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. The person's life may still be in danger.
- Do not wait for all of the signs to appear and do not try to guess the level of drunkenness
  - Do not leave the person alone
  - Place the person on his or her side
  - If vomiting occurs, clear the airway by sweeping vomited material out of their mouth
  - Monitor their breathing and heart rate
  - If breathing and heart rate cease, begin CPR

*When a friend is intoxicated:*

- CONTINUALLY MONITOR THE INTOXICATED 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 bicycle.
- 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.

***REMEMBER: THE ONLY THING THAT CAN  
SOBER A DRUNK IS TIME!!!!***

Adapted from/Sources:

Be Responsible About Drinking web site  
[http://www.brad21.org/alcohol\\_poisoning.html](http://www.brad21.org/alcohol_poisoning.html)

North Fork District Attorney's web  
page:[http://www.state.ma.us/da/norfolk/alcohol\\_poisoning.html](http://www.state.ma.us/da/norfolk/alcohol_poisoning.html),

The University of California at Davis, [Campus Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Program \(CADAPP\)](http://healthcenter.ucdavis.edu/alcoholpoisoning.html) <http://healthcenter.ucdavis.edu/alcoholpoisoning.html>

*The information provided is for educational purposes only and in should not substitute consultation with a trained professional.*

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