

Alcohol Poisoning

Getting drunk is common at University. All of us like some fun but you may come across someone who faces life-threatening alcohol poisoning. Listed below are notes to indicate how to recognize the signs and what action to take.

Watch for these signs

- Excessive consumption; often with vomiting
- Taking other medication
- Semi-conscious or unconscious & unable to waken them
- Cold, clammy or blue skin
- Rate of breathing less than 12 times per minute, or 10 second pauses between breathes
- Vomiting whilst sleeping or passed out and not waking after vomiting

What action to take

- Never leave the person alone. It is **NOT** OK to let someone "sleep it off".
- If you have been drinking get a sober person to help.
- Remain calm but be ready to get immediate medical help if needed.
- Place the person on their side, check pulse and breathing periodically.
- If they breathe less than 12 times in a minute or stop breathing for 10 seconds or more, call 999.
- Try to wake them if they appear to be asleep. If you cannot waken them call 999.
- Look at their skin, if cold, pale, bluish in colour or sweaty, call 999.
- If vomiting, stay with them, try to keep them sitting up, if they insist on lying down, lay them on their side with their head turned to the side. If they choke call 999.
- Do **NOT** give food, it may cause choking.
- If you cannot keep the person awake, position them on their side in a fetal position. Place a pillow in the small of their back to prevent them from rolling out of this position. This is important to help prevent aspiration if the person should vomit. **STAY WITH THE PERSON** and wake them up frequently. Just because the person is sleeping doesn't mean that the alcohol cannot get to the brain. Alcohol levels continue to rise, causing the person to become unconscious rather than asleep. If at any time you cannot wake the person up, **CALL 999**.

Any person that has altered consciousness, slowed respirations, or cool, pale skin is experiencing acute alcohol intoxication (alcohol poisoning). This is a medical emergency and you MUST get help.

DO NOT

- Laugh, make fun of, or provoke the person
- Exercise the person
- Allow the person to drive a car or ride a bicycle
- Give the person food, liquid, or drugs to sober them up
- 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 !!!

IF IN DOUBT "BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY" – CALL 999

Please feel free to print this page or remember where to find it if you need help
