

Binge Drinking and Alcohol Poisoning

A popular definition of binge drinking is having a whole lot to drink in a short time. A person who drinks too much, too quickly can poison him or herself as alcohol builds up in toxic levels in the body. This is known as **alcohol poisoning**. It takes the body about 1 to 1 1/2 hours to process one standard drink (one 12 ounce beer, 4-5 ounces of unfortified wine, or a shot of liquor).

Some people drink to the point of passing out. **Passing out** means someone has drunk so much that he or she is unconscious. If you think someone "sleeping" drank too much, try to "wake" the person. If you get no response, then he or she is unconscious, and medically speaking, near death. **Anyone who is unconscious for any reason needs medical attention. Call 911 to get help.** If you find the person is just sleeping, you still need to keep tabs on them as a person can go from a sleeping state to an unconscious state.

Alcohol Poisoning Symptoms

- unconsciousness or semiconsciousness
- slow breathing - 8 breaths or less per minute
- irregular breathing - 8-10 seconds or more between breaths
- slowed heart rate
- bluish or pale, cold, clammy skin
- vomiting while "sleeping" or passed out

How to Help a Person who has Alcohol Poisoning

- Don't leave the person alone.
- Keep the person on his/her side.
- Monitor breathing.
- Check pulse.
- Keep a cool rag on forehead.
- **CALL 911 FOR HELP if they are experiencing any of the above symptoms.**