



# ALCOHOL POISONING

*It may be tempting to laugh at the behavior of a friend or peer who is drunk. Some people may even think it's funny when someone pukes or passes out because they drank too much. But heavy drinking is a serious issue among college students, one that results in increased assaults, injuries, and even death. It's important to take these behaviors seriously, and to know what you can do to help.*

## **DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DANGERS OF ALCOHOL POISONING?**

When should you seek professional help for a friend? Sadly enough, too many college students say they wish they would have sought medical treatment for a friend. Many end up feeling responsible for alcohol-related tragedies that could have easily been prevented.

## **CRITICAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALCOHOL POISONING**

- Mental confusion, stupor, coma, or person cannot be roused
- Slow breathing (fewer than eight breaths per minute)
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT SOMEONE HAS ALCOHOL POISONING?**

- Know the signs and symptoms
- If there is any suspicion of an alcohol overdose, call 911 for help. Don't try to guess the level of drunkenness
- Do not wait for all symptoms to be present
- Be aware that a person who has passed out may die

## **WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO SOMEONE WITH ALCOHOL POISONING THAT GOES UNTREATED?**

- Victim chokes on his or her own vomit
- Heart beats irregularly or stops
- Untreated severe dehydration from vomiting can cause seizures, permanent brain damage, or death
- Breathing slows, becomes irregular, or stops
- Hypothermia (low body temperature)
- Hypoglycemia (too little blood sugar) leads to seizures

*Even if the victim lives, an alcohol overdose can lead to **IRREVERSIBLE BRAIN DAMAGE**. Rapid binge drinking (which often happens on a bet or a dare) is especially dangerous because the victim can ingest a fatal dose before becoming unconscious.*



## **DON'T BE AFRAID TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP FOR A FRIEND WHO HAS HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK.**

Don't worry that your friend may become angry or embarrassed—remember, you cared enough to help. Always be safe, not sorry.