

Alcohol Facts

1. Driving skills can be impaired by blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) as low as 0.02 percent.
2. There are more than 150 medications that should not be mixed with alcohol.
3. Drinking alcohol while you are pregnant can cause a range of birth defects, and children exposed to alcohol before birth can have lifelong learning and behavioral problems.
4. Liver disease, heart disease, certain forms of cancer, and pancreatitis can develop over many years of heavy drinking.
5. Alcohol consumption accounts for 85,000 deaths per year in the U. S. while illegal drugs account for 17,000 deaths.

6. Effects of alcohol can include slurred speech, disturbed sleep, nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, liver damage, heart damage, birth defects in the form of fetal alcohol syndrome.
7. Withdrawal from alcohol can include severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, convulsions, seizures, strokes and heart attacks.
8. 65% of the youth surveyed said that they got the alcohol they drink from family and friends.
9. Nearly 14 million Americans meet diagnostic criteria for alcohol use disorders.
10. Youth who drink alcohol are 50 times more likely to use cocaine than those who never drink alcohol.
11. More than 18% of Americans experience alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some time in their lives.
12. Traffic crashes are the greatest single cause of death for persons aged 6-33. About 45% of these fatalities are in alcohol-related crashes.
13. Approximately 90 percent of alcohol must be metabolized through the liver and the remaining 10 percent is eliminated through the lungs and urine. It takes about one hour to eliminate one-half ounce of alcohol.
14. A hangover is a sign of alcohol poisoning and is the body's reaction to alcohol withdrawal. Symptoms of a hangover include nausea, disorientation, headache, irritability and tremors.
15. One drink for the average person is a 12-ounce beer, five ounces of wine, or one and one-half ounces of 80-proof whiskey.
16. Alcohol is a depressant and impairs muscle coordination.
17. 88% of all the students surveyed at eight Virginia colleges reported at least one regrettable sexual encounter they could attribute to alcohol.
18. College students will spend about \$4.2 billion yearly for alcoholic beverages--which is more than is spent on operating campus libraries, college scholarships and fellowships combined.
19. The first amount of alcohol reaches the brain about 30 seconds after ingestion.
20. Alcohol acts as an irritant and increases the amount of hydrochloric acid (a digestive juice) secreted from the stomach lining and can cause gastritis, ulcers and severe bleeding.

The alcohol facts listed in this section come from many different reliable government sources. Please check back often as the alcohol facts listed are constantly being updated with new information.

For additional facts about alcohol, see the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) website.