

# What are the Effects of Alcohol Use?

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Alcohol affects different people differently at different times. How drinking alcohol affects *you* depends on the amount you drink, of course, but it also depends on your age, body weight, general health condition, and other factors we'll discuss below. Excessive drinking can cause severe mental and physical effects and can lead to serious consequences to your family, job, finances, and the larger community around you. Let's look at the effects of alcohol on the body during alcohol consumption.

## What Happens When You Drink Alcohol?

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When you're drinking alcohol, within just a few minutes it enters your blood through the stomach walls and small intestine, going through all areas of the body. It slows the brain and body functions, impacting thinking, sensations, and behavior. The blood alcohol level rises. The liver breaks down most of the alcohol in the body to remove it. The short- and long-term effects of alcohol depends on various combined factors, including:

- Body weight
- Age
- Empty stomach
- Gender
- Medications
- Other recreational drugs
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Alcohol tolerance level

## Blood Alcohol Level (BAC)

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The level of alcohol in a person's blood is his or her Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). If your BAC is 0.01, that means there is 0.01 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood in your body. For the average person, one standard drink raises the BAC by approximately 0.02 grams. It takes approximately one hour for that amount to break down in the body. But, that can vary. BAC is the measure of intoxication used by law enforcement for roadside testing.

## What Happens as Your BAC Increases?

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Drinking over one standard drink per hour increases your BAC. The more you drink, the longer it takes for the alcohol to pass from your system. An average person in good health is most likely to experience these effects while drinking alcohol and until his or her BAC level becomes reduced over the following hours:

### BAC of 0.05

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- Heightened sense of wellbeing
- Exceptionally relaxed and self-confident
- Increasing talkative

### BAC 0.05 to 0.08

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- Reduced alertness
- Impaired judgment
- Exaggerated behaviors
- Uncoordinated body movement
- Lowered inhibitions

### BAC 0.08 - 0.15

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- Distorted perception
- Slurred speech
- Loss of balance
- Impaired vision
- Poorer information processing
- Feeling emotional
- Poorer reaction time
- Nausea, vomiting

### BAC 0.15 - 0.30

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- Difficulty breathing
- Falling asleep
- Inability to walk
- Loss of consciousness

- Much poorer muscle control
- Poor bladder control
- Memory loss

## **BAC over 0.30**

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- Potential for coma
- Potential for death

## **Risks from High BAC**

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- Confusion
- Accident with injury to self or others
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slowed heart rate
- High-risk sexual behavior
- Domestic violence
- Intentional harm to self or others
- Alcohol poisoning
- Severe hangover symptoms

## **Long-Term Effects of Alcohol Abuse**

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The long-term effects of alcohol abuse can include alcohol addiction as well as:

- Diabetes, weight gain
- Mental health problems
- Higher risk of suicide
- High blood pressure
- Sexual performance problems
- Stomach cancer, bowel cancer, other cancers
- Alcohol dependency
- Reproductive problems such as reduced sperm count
- Stroke, dementia
- Brain damage
- Heart attack, heart damage
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Social problems
- Financial problems

## **Effects of Drinking Alcohol While Pregnant**

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Women who are pregnant, who plan to become pregnant, or who are breastfeeding should not drink alcohol. Drinking even a small amount of alcohol can cause severe harm to a fetus or a baby.

## Renaissance Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

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Renaissance Recovery Center offers outpatient alcohol rehab in Gilbert Arizona. Our addiction treatment specialists work with our clients to eliminate the senses of emotional pain, isolation, and shame that are common among people who struggle with AUD. Our process helps people move beyond alcohol use to a more meaningful life. Renaissance alcohol addiction treatment options include:

1. Partial Hospitalization Program
2. Outpatient Program
3. Aftercare Program

## Why Choose Renaissance AUD Rehab?

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We focus on the underlying issues that lead people to abuse alcohol, instead of just working on stopping drinking. This is the best approach to relapse prevention. Renaissance addiction recovery specialists work closely with each client to provide a recovery program tailored to individual needs.

**For alcohol addiction treatment, call Renaissance Recovery Center at (480) 526-7738, or contact us here online to schedule a free assessment and see how our SUD program can help.**

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