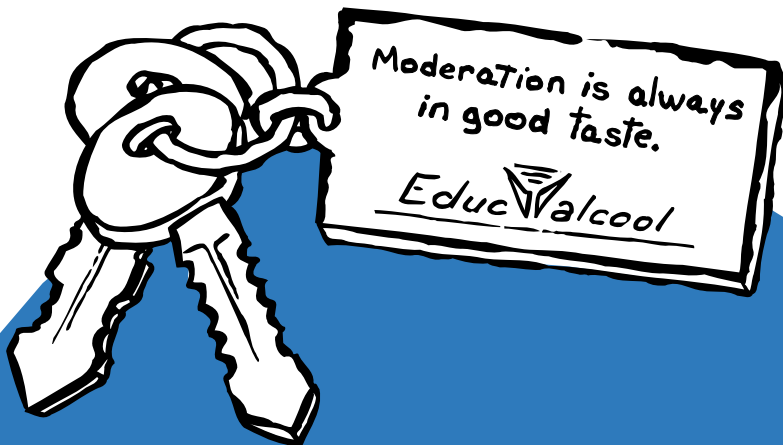


*presents*

# **DRINKING DRIVING MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE**





## IT'S NICE TO HAVE A DRINK NOW AND THEN

Nobody will deny that having a few drinks among friends can be a very pleasant thing to do. In reasonable quantities and with the right atmosphere, alcohol often adds just the right touch to a celebration or a get-together. Weddings and champagne, a toast at a graduation or promotion - for many people, a little glass of something can make an occasion special. Drinking is part of our cultural heritage. Since ancient times, alcohol has been associated with important rituals of all kinds, such as births, marriages, deaths and religious rites.

It's the same today. And most people understand that you derive optimum pleasure from drinking when you behave responsibly. For example, everyone knows that mixing drinks can make you sick. Drinking and driving is another dangerous combination. As a responsible driver, you should know that you are not allowed to drive if you have consumed more than the legal limit. When you drink and get behind the wheel, you endanger yourself and everyone else on the road. A devil-may-care attitude can cost you your life, not to mention the lives of people you care about. So if you've been drinking, don't drive.

## IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE LAW

If you are caught driving while intoxicated, your driver's permit will be suspended on the spot for 30 days if it's a first offense, and 90 days if it is a repeat offense. A first conviction will result in a substantial fine and you will automatically lose your licence for a year. You will also have to undergo a mandatory brief review of your driving skills at a special centre, to determine whether your drinking habits are affecting your ability to safely handle an automobile. If you do not perform well in the brief review, you will have to undergo a complete review.

If you have a learner's permit or probationary licence and are stopped with even the slightest amount of alcohol in your blood, your permit will be suspended for three months (in addition to the immediate 30 or 90-day suspension). You will also get 4 demerit points, and you will be fined \$300-\$600. And of course, if you are convicted of driving while impaired, you will be treated like any driver and lose your licence for a year.

## REGARDLESS OF YOUR AGE

It is strictly forbidden to drink alcohol before driving if you have a learner's permit. That means the legal blood-alcohol limit for learners is zero.

### LEGAL BLOOD-ALCOHOL LIMIT FOR DRIVING

Learner's permit	zero (0)
Temporary permit	zero (0)
Regular driver's licence	point zero eight (.08)

## IF YOU ARE UNDER 25

You will receive a learner's permit first, but after passing your driving test, you will not receive your permanent licence immediately. Instead, you will be issued a temporary permit good for 24 months or until you turn 25.

## IF YOU ARE 25 OR OLDER

You will receive a learner's permit first, and after passing your driving test, you will obtain your permanent driver's licence.

## IF YOU TURN 25 WHILE YOU HAVE A TEMPORARY PERMIT

The day of your 25th birthday, you may apply for and obtain your permanent driver's licence, even if you have not completed the 24-month probation period.

If you are caught driving while intoxicated, your driver's permit will be suspended on the spot for 30 days if it's a first offense, and 90 days if it is a repeat offense. A first conviction will result in a substantial fine and you will automatically lose your licence for a year. You will also have to undergo a mandatory brief review of your driving skills at a special centre, to determine whether your drinking habits are affecting your ability to safely handle an automobile. If you do not perform well in the brief review, you will have to undergo a complete review.

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The law applies to all drivers, no matter how experienced you are, or why you were drinking. The legal limit is the legal limit, and no police officer will cut you any slack just because you were celebrating a promotion or your sister's wedding! Remember also that, under certain circumstances, your faculties may be impaired even before you reach the legal limit. So it's best to drink moderately (if you have a permanent driver's licence) or have someone else do the driving for you.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF

How can you tell if your faculties are impaired and you've exceeded the legal blood-alcohol limit? The table on the following page can help you determine your condition and avoid unpleasant surprises. Be sure to look at the right box for your sex, weight and number of drinks you've had.

This data is for reference purposes only and should be interpreted carefully. Not all people respond to alcohol the same way, and blood-alcohol levels can rise even more quickly than indicated in the charts. For example, if you drink when you're tired, upset, sad or on medication, you may become impaired without even realizing it.

## Men

Number of drinks	125 lb. 57 kg	150 lb. 68 kg	175 lb. 80 kg	200 lb. 91 kg	250 lb. 113 kg
1	34 mg	29 mg	25 mg	22 mg	17 mg
2	69 mg	58 mg	50 mg	43 mg	35 mg
3	103 mg	87 mg	75 mg	65 mg	52 mg
4	139 mg	116 mg	100 mg	87 mg	70 mg
5	173 mg	145 mg	125 mg	108 mg	87 mg

• There is the same amount of alcohol in one standard serving of beer (341 ml/12 oz, 5% alcohol), one standard glass of wine (142 ml/5 oz, 12% alcohol) or one standard shot of spirits (43 ml/1.5 oz, 40% alcohol). Each of these is considered one standard drink. When you drink cider, which is usually served in a 142 ml (5 oz) glass, you have to check the label for the alcohol content, which can vary from 2.5 to 20%.

## Women

Number of drinks	100 lb. 45 kg	125 lb. 57 kg	150 lb. 68 kg	175 lb. 80 kg	200 lb. 91 kg
1	50 mg	40 mg	34 mg	29 mg	26 mg
2	101 mg	80 mg	68 mg	58 mg	50 mg
3	152 mg	120 mg	101 mg	87 mg	76 mg
4	203 mg	162 mg	135 mg	117 mg	101 mg
5	253 mg	202 mg	169 mg	146 mg	126 mg

• Subtract 15 mg per hour from the time you have the first drink, because that is the rate at which the body eliminates alcohol. If your liver is not healthy, it works more slowly and the process of elimination is affected accordingly. Anyone with health problems should not drink at all, or else drink very moderately.

When you drink, you must always keep in mind that your emotional and physical condition can influence your reaction. Alcohol can play all kinds of tricks on you, and you don't want to find out about them when you're driving!



## KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS

Never mind how your friends, colleagues or drinking partners react. Everyone responds to alcohol in his or her own way, depending on a number of physical and emotional factors. How quickly you drink, your weight, your muscle mass and your sex all determine how much you can drink before becoming impaired.



When it comes to alcohol, we are not all equal. As a general rule, women get drunk more easily than men. It has to do with the difference in size, weight and body fat. Since alcohol is fat-soluble, it affects women more quickly, because they have proportionately more body fat than men. Research has also shown that women have less of the stomach enzyme that helps break down alcohol and eliminate it. The lack of this enzyme means more alcohol is absorbed by the blood. That's why it takes less alcohol for a woman to get tipsy than for a man. For the average woman, one drink is equivalent to one-and-a-half drinks for a man. Keep that in mind if you are a woman, and don't let anyone influence how much you drink. Don't compare yourself to others, and always judge the situation according to how you feel: your body doesn't lie! Life is just too short to play Russian roulette with alcohol. It's up to you to learn to drink responsibly and know your own limits.

## A CRITICAL PATH

Any alcohol that is not absorbed and digested like food moves quickly into the bloodstream, unaltered. More than 80% of the alcohol in your drinks is absorbed by the small intestine; the rest passes directly from the stomach into the bloodstream.

The process occurs more quickly when you drink on an empty stomach: the alcohol is absorbed by the small intestine in less than 30 minutes. That's why you get drunk faster when you drink without eating. Emptying your glass in one shot also has a greater impact than if you sip your drink slowly.

Drinking with or after a meal is therefore a smart choice, because the food in your stomach slows the process by which alcohol enters the bloodstream. Alcohol mixed with food is released into the small intestine in smaller quantities and takes much longer to enter the bloodstream - between one and three hours.

## A FREE RIDE FROM STOMACH TO BRAIN

Once in your bloodstream, alcohol is carried to all the tissues in your body and into the brain. It affects the entire central nervous system and influences the main control centres, in particular your muscular coordination and decision-making capacity.

Your liver does the bulk of the work in eliminating the alcohol you drink, transforming 90% of it through oxidation. Your kidneys, lungs and perspiration complete the cleansing process. No matter how much you drink, your liver continues to function as usual. It is programmed to metabolize alcohol at a rate of 15 mg an hour. It can't accomplish miracles if you douse it with liquor! If you drink too quickly, your liver becomes engorged and can't meet the demand. Soon, your head starts to spin and you begin to feel nauseous. At that point, you'd better stop drinking, because you won't feel better until the alcohol in your body is eliminated. It goes without saying that you must never even think about driving when you're in such a state. Don't be afraid to ask someone to take you home; it's nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, it's the most intelligent thing you can do.

## A FEW TENACIOUS MYTHS

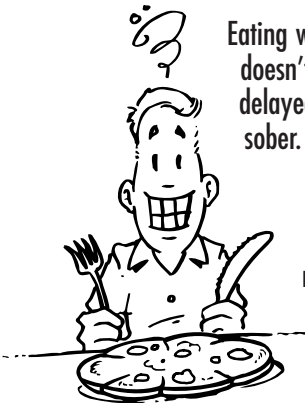
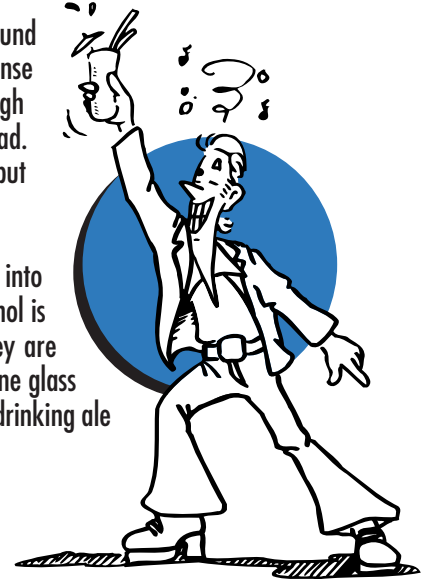
If you continue to drink after reaching this stage of intoxication, your liver will fall hopelessly behind. The alcohol in each additional drink will accumulate in your body and have to wait to be eliminated. All that excess alcohol quickly leads to discomfort and inebriation.

No amount of exercise will help you recover your senses. Nor will cold showers. Moving around and breathing fresh air won't reduce your blood-alcohol level. Running, dancing or intense physical activity doesn't work either, because only 3% of the alcohol is eliminated through perspiration. Some people wrongly believe that strong coffee can clear your head. Unfortunately, it is of absolutely no use in combatting inebriation. It may keep you awake, but it won't prevent you from doing something stupid...

If you're used to drinking and don't feel the effects as noticeably, don't let that fool you into making an incorrect assessment of your condition. You may not feel "drunk," but the alcohol is still there in your bloodstream. A common misconception among beer drinkers is that they are less at risk than others. But one bottle or can of beer has the same amount of alcohol as one glass of wine or one shot of hard liquor (gin, vodka, scotch, etc.). If you spend an evening chain-drinking ale or lager, you will be as inebriated as the person who downs one scotch after the other.

Eating while you drink slows the passage of alcohol into the bloodstream, but it doesn't prevent your blood-alcohol level from rising with each drink. Beware of delayed reactions. A few slices of pizza are no guarantee that you'll remain sober. In fact, the extra calories may add another problem to the one you already have!

Many drivers stubbornly insist that they're ready to drive after an hour without drinking, claiming they've returned to normal. Actually, it takes your body an hour to eliminate 15 mg of alcohol. Depending on how much you have drunk, it is likely to take a lot longer than 60 minutes for your blood-alcohol level to drop back down to the legal limit. If you've been drinking for hours, patience is the only safe route to take.



## THE GRADUAL IMPACT OF ALCOHOL

Despite its mildly euphoric effect, alcohol is not a stimulant. It is a depressant that slows brain activity and reduces tension. Under the influence of alcohol, you tend to lose your inhibitions and, in the early stages at least, you may experience a certain sense of well-being that makes you feel more sociable.

Alcohol changes your perception of yourself and others. It makes you bolder but also impairs your judgement. If you drink a lot, your reflexes slow down and it becomes dangerous to drive. Gradually, without even realizing it, you begin to lose control and you may have difficulty seeing clearly. At that point, it becomes very difficult to concentrate or respond properly at the right time.

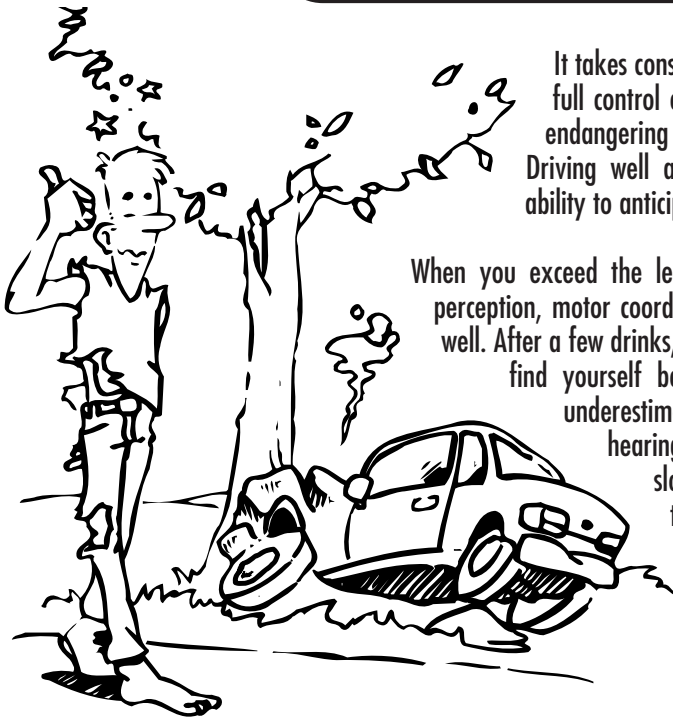
Your coordination is affected when you drink too much. When you are intoxicated, you may have trouble seeing, feel confused, and be unsure as to where you are.



## HOW TO TELL WHEN SOMEONE HAS HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK

It's important to recognize when a person's faculties are impaired so that you can help out, if necessary. How can you help? By preventing the person from driving, by offering a lift home, or by proposing any other safe solution. It's fairly easy to tell when people have had too much to drink: their eyes look irritated and bloodshot, they breathe more quickly, and they may perspire more than usual. People under the influence of alcohol tend to speak more quickly and loudly, and they often have trouble pronouncing words clearly. They have difficulty standing up and walking a straight line; they may stumble or stagger for no apparent reason. They move more sluggishly and seem distracted, responding to questions more slowly than normal. They may even simply fall asleep. Alcohol also affects behaviour: it can intensify feelings of sadness, make a person aggressive or noisy, or provoke an attack of uncontrollable laughter that has absolutely nothing to do with joie de vivre!

## DRIVING WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE



It takes considerable focus and attention to drive a vehicle. You must be in full control of all your faculties when you get behind the wheel to avoid endangering yourself, your passengers, and anyone else on the road. Driving well and responsibly takes good judgement, quick reflexes, the ability to anticipate events and perfect muscle coordination.

When you exceed the legal blood-alcohol limit, you begin to develop trouble with perception, motor coordination and concentration, which affects your ability to drive well. After a few drinks, your faculties will be seriously impaired and you are likely to find yourself behaving differently: without realizing it, you will tend to underestimate risk. When you are intoxicated, your peripheral vision, hearing and ability to judge distances are diminished. Your reflexes slow down and you may have great difficulty reacting properly to avoid an obstacle in the road. So don't fool around: if you've drunk too much, trust your car keys - and your life - to someone who is sober.

## DRIVING RESPONSIBLY

When you drive, you are always a potential danger to yourself and others, even if you are under the legal blood-alcohol limit. If you drink too much, you must never drive, even if you feel as though you're in complete control. It doesn't take much for an accident to happen...

Remember that your own assessment of your condition is far from objective. We all have a social responsibility to each other when it comes to drunk driving. Friends, relatives, co-workers or drinking buddies should always do what they can to prevent an intoxicated person from driving, while proposing a safe alternative.

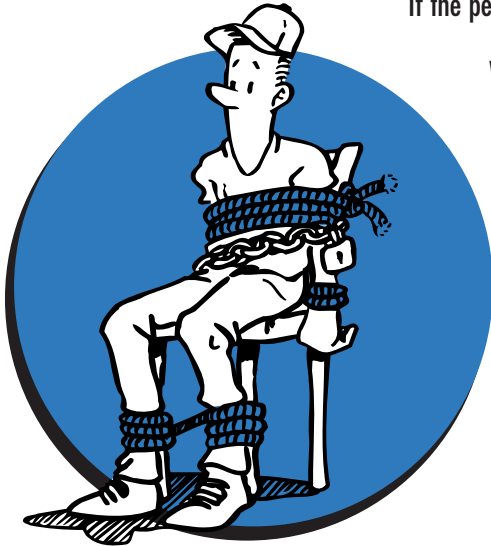
After all, drunk driving is everyone's business.

## A FEW TIPS FOR AVOIDING PROBLEMS WHEN YOU'RE OUT PARTYING

If you go out for an evening with your partner or a group of friends, you can always appoint a "designated driver" who agrees to drink non-alcoholic beverages only. Each person can take a turn being the designated driver, so that the system remains fair. Other inexpensive options are sharing a taxi or taking public transportation. During the Holiday Season, when there's a lot of drinking going on, be sure to call Opération Nez rouge, a non-judgemental organization with volunteer drivers who take people home when they've had too much to drink.

If you're hosting a party, you can do your part to minimize the risk of drunk driving. Be sure to provide plenty of non-alcoholic beverages - soft drinks, juices, carbonated spring water, exotic fruit punches - so that people don't have to drink alcohol. At the end of the evening, it's a good idea to stop serving alcoholic drinks about an hour before you expect people to leave. Keep an eye on your guests and encourage them to rest a while and stop drinking, in anticipation of their departure.

If any of your guests appears noticeably drunk, everyone should be concerned. Don't hesitate to intervene and prevent the person from driving. He or she will thank you one day! If arranging transportation is a problem, you can offer your guest a bed for the night, or try to find someone nearby who can provide similar hospitality. If the person insists on going home, be sure that someone else does the driving.



Whatever the circumstances, remember that drinking moderately is always more pleasant, allowing you to enjoy what you drink without getting drunk. Responsible people drink smaller quantities, sip slowly, and remain aware of their condition. It's an attitude everyone should adopt all the time. If you plan to drive, it's no issue: if you have a permanent driver's licence, you should drink very prudently or else abstain completely if you can't control yourself. People must always be aware of their responsibilities behind the wheel and let someone else drive if they are not in full possession of their faculties. Alcohol definitely has a place in our lives - but there's no room for it in our cars! We all have to learn to take an enlightened, responsible approach to drinking, no matter what road we choose.

**Éduc**  **alcool**

*Moderation is always in good taste.*