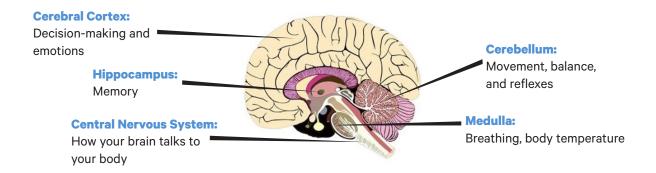


ALCOHOL: UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

ALCOHOL AND THE BRAIN

From the age of 12, through your early 20s, the human brain is rapidly developing and forming connections. Alcohol use during this time can affect that process, which means that you could damage your ability to think, learn, and remember things in the long term.



ALCOHOL AND THE BODY

Alcohol processes through your body as a poison. This means that your liver is working in overdrive to filter the alcohol out of your blood stream. Other organs also are strained in the process of digesting alcohol. If too much alcohol is in the blood stream, the brain will start to shut down. This is why people can experience black outs or even pass out from drinking. This is a medical emergency; people can die from consuming too much alcohol. Over time, alcohol consumption can also lead to organ failure and a variety of different cancers.

ALCOHOL AND BEHAVIOR

Alcohol can change a person's behavior and functioning in a variety of ways:

- Impaired reaction time
- Blurred vision
- Worsened balance and physical coordination
- Lowered social inhibitions
- Stronger emotions (anger, sadness, happiness, etc.)
- And more...

These changes explain why it is dangerous to drink and drive, why people may stumble or fall while drunk, why people may harm their social relationships while drunk, and ultimately why it is so important to surround yourself with people you can trust.