

# Health & Wellness Information

## Alcohol Awareness Month

### What is Alcohol?

*Ethyl alcohol* is created by fermentation, a process in which yeast fungus feeds on sugars and/or starches in various grains (such as rice, barley, or hops) or fruits (such as grapes) and excretes alcohol along with carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

Ethyl alcohol is a depressant drug and not a stimulant as claimed by many people.

### How Alcohol is absorbed by the body:

When a person drinks an alcoholic beverage, roughly 20% of the alcohol is absorbed in the stomach and 80% is absorbed in the small intestine.

#### Factors that effect the absorption rate of Alcohol:

- The type of drink,
- Frequency of drinks that are consumed,
- Whether the stomach is empty or full,
- The individuals body weight
- The concentration of alcohol in the drink affect the speed at which the alcohol is absorbed.

Once the alcohol is absorbed into the tissues, it affects the individual's body and his or her brain. It usually takes around 20 minutes after having an alcoholic beverage for a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level to rise. After alcohol is absorbed and metabolized, it exits the body essentially in three ways: via the liver, kidneys, and via the lungs.

### Recommendations with Alcohol Intake:

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, if you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation, which is defined as no more than 1 drink per day for women and no more than 2 drinks per day for men.



### People that should not drink Alcohol are:

- Pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- Taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that may cause harmful reactions when mixed with alcohol.
- Younger than age 21.
- Recovering from alcoholism or are unable to control the amount they drink.
- Suffering from a medical condition that may be worsened by alcohol.
- Driving, planning to drive, or participating in other activities requiring skill, coordination, and alertness.

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