

## avoiding *negative* consequences

The hangover is characterized by:

- headaches
- muscle stiffness
- dry mouth
- general aches and pains

The major cause of these effects is **dehydration** resulting from your liver's efforts to metabolize the alcohol in your system. The severity of a hangover is related to drinking rate, peak blood alcohol concentration (BAC), and the amount of alcohol consumed. The faster you drink, the higher your peak BAC, and the more alcohol you consume, the greater your hangover.

### to reduce hangovers:

- Stay hydrated by alternating alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages
- Slow absorption by eating before and while drinking
- Stay in the blue zone longer by not drinking quickly
- Adopt the "lower-risk" drinking behaviors

## does tolerance make a d i f f e r e n c e ?

Tolerance is a measure of how much our body has adapted to alcohol. As tolerance goes up, our body adapts to a particular blood level of alcohol as being 'normal' for us. In the case of alcohol, research indicates that tolerance decreases the "euphoric" effects of alcohol, and increases hangover effects. You end up spending more time and money attempting to achieve alcohol's positive effects and it will take more time to recover from over-consumption.

As tolerance makes our system less sensitive to alcohol, it is also making us less aware of how impaired we really are. People with a high tolerance have even less sensitivity to the effects of alcohol and are even less likely to accurately gauge when they are impaired.

### to reduce your risk of developing tolerance:

- Set a lower-risk drink limit (Stay in the Blue BAC Zone, 0.02-0.05).
- Drink at a moderate pace; 1 drink per hour is about how much your body can process.
- Drink two or fewer times a week.
- Take a break from drinking for at least one week every month and following any heavy use.
- If you already have a high tolerance – slowly reduce consumption until you are following the lower-risk guidelines discussed above.

This is one reason the American Medical Association recommends no more than 1 drink per day for women and no more than 2 drinks per day for men.

## point of *diminishing* returns

Diminishing returns is the idea that the "high" you feel from consuming alcohol is reached at BAC's between .00 and .06, and further drinking does not produce greater euphoria. In fact, it has the *opposite* effect and leads to a greater chance of experiencing negative consequences. STAY IN THE BLUE!

**The Department of Student Health believes that decisions concerning alcohol consumption are a personal choice, and that students should make informed decisions regarding alcohol use. For those students who are not 21, the only legal choice is to abstain from drinking. For those students who choose to consume alcohol we recommend that you consume alcohol in a lower-risk manner to reduce negative outcomes associated with your alcohol use.**

**These educational materials promote lower-risk alcohol consumption for those who choose to drink, and should not be construed as endorsing or promoting underage consumption.**

Info Source: Coordinator of Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention, Student Wellness Center [wellness@osu.edu](mailto:wellness@osu.edu).

## what is "a drink"?

ONE	12oz	4oz	1.25oz
DRINK =	beer	wine	shot
EQUALS	(4.1% alcohol)	(12% alcohol)	(80 proof, 40% alcohol)

## what is "BAC"?

BAC = Blood Alcohol Concentration and is expressed as the percentage of alcohol in deciliters of blood and is measure in percentages. For instance, having a BAC of 0.05 percent means that a person has ½ part alcohol per 1,000 parts blood in the body.

Use your BAC card to see where your specific blue zone is and how you can stay there.

### stay in your **BLUE BAC zone**

**0.02 – 0.03** = Little or no loss of coordination, slight euphoria and loss of shyness

**0.04 – 0.05** = Lowered inhibitions, minor impairment in reasoning, memory, motor skills and judgement, lowering of cautions

### *0 drinks...*

...if you're driving, pregnant, taking medication or have alcohol or other drug dependencies. It's always O.K. not to drink! This is the lowest-risk choice.

## r e s o u r c e s

### student health & social norms marketing

<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/hp/norms/resources.html>

### Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):

243-5150

[www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/caps](http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/caps)

### Peer Health Educators (PHE):

924-1509

[www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/phe.html](http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/phe.html)

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### center for alcohol and substance education (CASE)

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team (ADAPT):

924-5276

[www.virginia.edu/case](http://www.virginia.edu/case)

### CHOICES Class:

2 session class focusing on prevention and reducing risk for all alcohol-related health issue

924-5276

[www.virginia.edu/case](http://www.virginia.edu/case)

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### community

### Alcoholics Anonymous:

293-6565

### Friends of Bill W. (Students seeking recovery in the tradition of AA, Dean Laushway):

924-7133

### Region 10 (need-based resource providing counseling):

972-1800

*lower-risk*

drinking

guidelines

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and

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