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Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol is the number one drug problem in the United States causing around 100,000 deaths every year. Surprisingly, this number is on the rise. One who drinks an excessive amount of alcohol could have alcohol poisoning which is extremely fatal. A human liver is vital to the human body and carries out important functions such as processing what you eat, drink, and the nutrients that you intake. Your liver also removes harmful substances from the blood. This is where alcohol becomes a major threat. Alcohol destroys the liver cells which leads to major health issues especially for heavy drinkers. Why are there desires to put excessive amounts of this substance into one's body, what are the overall health effects if you have abused this substance and how can you prevent alcohol abuse from occurring?

There are numerous causes of why one might resort to alcohol. One cause for alcohol abuse is stress (Watt). Some people drink alcohol to make them feel better about a stressful situation. Whether it's your job, financial issues, or family problems, alcohol could potentially make the situation even worse. Alcohol is a depressant which means it slows down the brain and the central nervous system processes. "Over time, heavy drinking interferes with the neurotransmitters in the brain that are needed for good mental health. So while alcohol may help deal with stress in the short term, in the long run it can contribute to feeling of depression and anxiety and make stress harder to deal with"(Cyhlarova).Healthy ways of relieving stress are

exercising, stretching or taking a warm bath. Another cause to drinking is peer pressure. Peer pressure is why many students experiment with alcohol in the first place. Saying “no” is not easy for a lot of people. The first thing you should always remember is that at a party, in order to have fun, you don’t need alcohol. Many people drink in order to fit in. If you believe that saying “no” will make you lose your friend, then you are better off without them. A true friend will respect your wise decisions. These are just a few of the numerous reasons concerning why one might resort to drinking alcohol.

There are many harmful effects to alcohol abuse. If one drinks an excessive amount, they will develop alcohol poisoning. This can lead to unconsciousness and potentially death (Watts). Alcohol spikes your blood pressure. Therefore, if you drink too much, you can also develop a sudden heart attack or stroke. When drinking alcohol, it affects all organs in the body, not just the liver (Calder). An outcome of this is impaired motor functions. For the brain, alcohol interferes with the brain’s communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. Drinking consecutively rather than on a single occasion can damage the heart, causing problems including: cardiomyopathy, arrhythmias, stroke and high blood pressure. An exception to drinking is that research shows drinking moderate amounts of alcohol may protect adults from coronary heart disease (Cyhlarova). Effects on the liver are liver inflations such as fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis and cirrhosis. Drinking an abundance of alcohol can cause the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can lead to pancreatitis which prevents proper digestion. These are effects on the main organs however alcohol can cause even more problems inside. There are a numerous amount of cancers that you can develop from this and a few to name are mouth, esophagus, throat, liver, and breast. Drinking too much can weaken your

immune system. This makes your body a much easier target for disease. Chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much. Drinking a lot on a single occasion slows your body's ability to ward off infections – even up to 24 hours after getting intoxicated(NIAAA Organization). With all these harmful possibilities, why would one even consider drinking?

There are many ways alcohol abuse can be prevented. One way is warning labels. These labels aim to inform and remind drinkers that alcohol can have everlasting and fatal effects. These labels should increase size within the next couple years. Zero- tolerance laws could be a major decision breaker for someone who likes to heavily drink. The National Highway Systems Act provides incentives for all the States that adopt "zero-tolerance laws" which sets maximum blood alcohol concentration limits for drivers under twenty one to 0.02 percent or lower beginning October 1, 2011(Griffith). An analysis of the effect of zero-tolerance laws in the first 12 states enacting them found a 20-percent relative reduction for fatal crashes among drivers under 21, compared with nearby States that did not pass zero-tolerance laws. Alcohol is extremely expensive, and adding to the price, there is tax. For some, this drink is way too pricey which can cause one to not buy the product. If one has gotten addicted to this substance there is help (Calder). One should get this help so they can prevent this habit from getting worse. There are many organizations that offer help 24/7. You can find a numerous amount of these online. Sometimes all it takes is someone to talk to however if it is bad, one might need to seek medication. Today, these prevention methods are in motion. Everyday, people are thinking of new methods to stop alcohol abuse. If you are already addicted and it is too late, it is possible to stop.

All in all, there are many reasons why one may resort to alcohol. Some feel like it is their only hope to being stress-free. Alcohol is not the answer and definitely causes more harm than good. Drinking can not only cause short-term effects but long-term effects as well. These outcomes can be fatal. Why set yourself up with these life threatening illnesses? Alcohol can potentially be healthy if consumed in small amounts but abuse is different than this. Rethink your third drink and live a long healthy life.

Citations

Watts, Tim J. "Alcohol Abuse." *Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society*. ABC-CLIO, 2014. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society. ABC-CLIO, 2014. Web. 18 Feb. 2014. (Cyhlarova)

Alcoholic Beverages.*Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society*. ABC-CLIO, 2014. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.(Griffith)

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