

Jamison: Patient Education and Wellness

HANDOUT 17.5: HEALTH IMPACT OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

See

http://www.bupa.co.uk/health_information/html/healthy_living/lifestyle/alcohol/alcohol_mind_body.html

Physical effects of alcohol abuse

Short-term effects

After drinking do you sometimes experience:

- distorted vision and hearing?
- impaired coordination?
- altered perception?
- impaired judgement?
- volatile emotions?
- hangovers?

A tick in any of the above boxes indicates that you are drinking too much.

See <http://www.webmd.com/video/hangover-tips>

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/slideshow-hangover-myths>

Long-term effects of heavy alcohol use

If you continue to drink to excess, you risk:

- losing your appetite
- vitamin deficiency
- stomach ailments
- skin problems
- sexual impotence
- liver damage
- heart and central nervous system damage
- memory loss

See

http://hcd2.bupa.co.uk/fact_sheets/html/alcohol_induced_cirrhosis.html

Socioeconomic consequences of alcohol abuse

If you continue to drink too much, you may experience:

- Declining work performance
 - reduced productivity
 - frequent days off work
 - lateness to work
 - extended lunch hours
 - errors of judgement and accidents
 - job loss

Economic difficulties

- gambling debts
- outstanding personal loans
- business failure

Legal problems

- drink-driving offences
- motor vehicle accidents
- assaults

Psychoemotional consequences of alcohol abuse

If you continue to drink too much, you risk developing:

Psychological problems:

- anxiety
- depression
- morbid jealousy
- suicide attempts

Family disharmony:

- violence
- divorce
- delinquent behaviour in children
- frequent family visits to the general practitioner

Unhelpful habits and attitudes, including becoming:

- unreliable, neglectful or forgetful of details
- a procrastinator
- a liar and using excuses
- suspicious and paranoid
- sensitive to any reference about drinking
- sloppy, with declining hygiene and appearance
- a changed personality