

Alcohol

- Ethyl alcohol, a natural substance formed by the fermentation that occurs when sugar reacts with yeast, is the major active ingredient in wine, beer, and distilled spirits.
- Ethyl alcohol can produce feelings of well-being, sedation, intoxication, unconsciousness or can cause death depending on how much is consumed and how fast it is consumed.
- Alcohol is a “psychoactive,” or mind-altering drug, as are narcotics and tranquilizers. It can alter moods, cause changes in the body, and become habit forming. Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, and too much can cause slowed reactions, slurred speech, and unconsciousness. Chronic use of alcohol has been associated with such diseases as alcoholism and cancers of the liver, stomach, colon, larynx, esophagus, and breast. Alcohol abuse can also lead to damage to the brain, pancreas and kidneys; high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes; hepatitis and cirrhosis of the liver; stomach and duodenal ulcers; colitis; impotence and infertility; and premature aging. Abuse of alcohol has also been linked to birth defects and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.