



**DRINKING GAMES
CAN BE DEADLY**

★ WHAT ARE DRINKING GAMES? ★

Drinking games are contests or challenges during which a maximum amount of alcohol is consumed in a very short time. The practice is also known as binge drinking.

Drinking contests may take place casually, among friends, or be more formally organized by a bar or a club. They can be public or private, with or without spectators.

The games go by various names. Century Club, Quarters, Boat Races and Chug-a-Lug are a few you may have heard about.

The point is that these are all very dangerous "games" that can lead to severe intoxication and alcohol poisoning. The danger begins when your blood alcohol level hits 400 mg per 100 ml of blood (commonly referred to as .40). More than that, and there is a serious risk of coma and even death.

★ DRINKING GAMES = DANGER ★

Many things can happen when you drink too much. The effects become more serious the more you drink, and the risk is extremely high when your blood alcohol level is over 200 mg per 100 ml of blood (.20).

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (mg/100 ml of blood)	STAGE	EFFECTS
0 to 50 (0 to .05)	Sobriety: normal behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little or no significant influence - Anxiety and inhibitions may be reduced
50 to 100 (.05 to .10)	Euphoria: mild intoxication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Euphoria (feeling of well-being and satisfaction) - Loss of inhibitions - Increased talkativeness, sociability and liveliness - Progressive decrease in attention, concentration and judgment - Coordination impairment begins
100 to 200 (.10 to .20)	Inebriation: moderate intoxication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progressive decrease in memory and comprehension - Difficulty paying attention and exercising judgment - Progressive visual impairment - Face pale or flushed - Slurred speech - Emotional instability - Increased reaction time - Slower reflexes - Poor coordination
200 to 300 (.20 to .30)	Advanced inebriation: severe intoxication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spluttering - Incoherence - Confusion - Disorientation - Marked sensory impairment - Alteration in perception of colours, shapes, motion and dimensions - Insensitivity to pain - Nausea, vomiting - Apathy, drowsiness - Emotional outbursts - Temporary blindness or blackouts - Marked decrease in motor coordination
300 to 400 (.30 to .40)	Stupor: extreme intoxication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant decrease in response to stimuli - Daze accompanied by numbness (loss of sensitivity and slowed thinking) - Very marked decrease in motor coordination - Deep sleep - Excessive perspiration - Hypothermia (reduced body temperature) - Loss of bladder control - Risk of inhaling vomit
400 to 500 (.40 to .50)	Coma or death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of sensation - Loss of consciousness - Loss of reflexes - Loss of bowel control - Marked respiratory depression - Coma or death due to respiratory arrest

WARNING!
HIGH-RISK ZONE

WARNING!
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED
911



★ HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL ★

When it comes to drinking, there's no point looking to your friends, no matter how nice they are. Everyone responds differently to alcohol, depending on various physical and emotional factors. How quickly you drink, how much you weigh and how much muscle mass you have can also affect how you react. And, unfair as it may seem, alcohol affects women more quickly than men. In terms of impact, an average drink for a woman is equivalent to a drink and a half for a man. So it's very important to know exactly what your tolerance is.

These charts can help you determine what your blood alcohol level is likely to be after drinking. Please remember that these figures are approximate only.

Subtract 15 mg of alcohol per hour from the time you take your first drink, since that's the rate at which your body eliminates alcohol.



NUMBER OF DRINKS	125 lb/57 kg	150 lb/68 kg	175 lb/80 kg	200 lb/91 kg	250 lb/113 kg
1	34 mg	29 mg	25 mg	22 mg	17 mg
2	69 mg	58 mg	50 mg	43 mg	35 mg
3	103 mg	87 mg	75 mg	65 mg	52 mg
4	139 mg	116 mg	100 mg	87 mg	70 mg
5	173 mg	145 mg	125 mg	108 mg	87 mg



NUMBER OF DRINKS	100 lb/45 kg	125 lb/57 kg	150 lb/68 kg	175 lb/80 kg	200 lb/91 kg
1	50 mg	40 mg	34 mg	29 mg	26 mg
2	101 mg	80 mg	68 mg	58 mg	50 mg
3	152 mg	120 mg	101 mg	87 mg	76 mg
4	203 mg	162 mg	135 mg	117 mg	101 mg
5	253 mg	202 mg	169 mg	146 mg	126 mg

STANDARD DRINK:



BEER

341 ml or 12 oz
5 % alcohol



WINE

142 ml or 5 oz
12 % alcohol



SPIRITS

43 ml or 1.5 oz
40 % alcohol

CIDER

When you drink cider, which is usually served in a 142 ml (5 oz) glass, you have to check the label for the alcohol content, which can vary from 2.5 to 20%.

★ WHAT TO DO WHEN DRINKING GAMES ARE PLAYED ★

You must do whatever you can to prevent such games and contests from getting started. Begin by trying to **persuade** the organizers or drinkers not to engage in this dangerous practice. If they proceed anyway, you have to do what you can to **prevent** people from harming themselves and others.

Under no circumstances should you shrug it off and ignore what's happening. People who engage in this type of binge drinking are endangering their lives and the lives of others. You don't have to be a hero; this is simply about taking whatever steps are available to you to prevent this extremely dangerous activity.

YOU HEAR THAT A DRINKING GAME IS BEING ORGANIZED

Let's say you hear about a drinking contest some people are organizing somewhere on campus or in someone's home. Some drinking games are even played online with people from other countries. You might be invited to participate, as either a drinker or a spectator. We know it's hard to say no. You don't want to look like a coward or a wimp or someone who's "above" the others.

This is when you remind yourself that binge drinkers are really a very small minority. They make a lot of noise - but they don't represent a significant percentage of people.

Whatever the type of drinking event, remember that binge drinkers need an audience. This is a group activity and the fewer the people around, the less likely it is to happen.

Rule number one is never to stand alone against the binge drinkers. Don't isolate yourself: get together with people who think like you do. You and your friends can then let the binge drinkers know that you're not interested in their stupid games and you have better things to do. The goal is try to get them NOT to play the game. You can express your disapproval in various ways, but whatever you do, don't sit around and watch: that's exactly what the binge drinkers want you to do!

YOU FIND YOURSELF AT AN IMPROMPTU DRINKING GAME

You're hanging out with some friends, and suddenly someone suggests a drinking game. Or you're in a bar and you realize that a contest is being organized, even though it was not publicized.

Once again, don't do this alone. Get together with others who are against the activity and voice your disapproval. Let the organizers know that you'll all leave the party if they proceed with the drinking game. Be strong and assertive!

You'll probably be surprised to see the kind of influence you have. But even if people start laughing and making fun of you, don't let them intimidate you. Express your disagreement; if they decide to go ahead, make good on your threat to leave - but don't sneak out quietly. Make sure people know you're leaving and why.

Finally, if something bad does happen, DO NOT feel guilty about it. You did what you could and if the others behaved irresponsibly, it is not your fault. Those who participated have to be accountable for their actions.

If you are in a licensed establishment (a bar, tavern, brasserie, restaurant, etc.), DO NOT confront a customer or a server, either alone or with a group of friends. Leave the premises, call the police (911) and let them know that a drinking contest is taking place or being organized.

★ IF SOMEONE BECOMES SERIOUSLY INTOXICATED ★

If, despite your best efforts, the drinking activity takes place and someone loses consciousness, is no longer responding, is having difficulty breathing, has a weak pulse or begins vomiting repeatedly, dial 911 immediately.

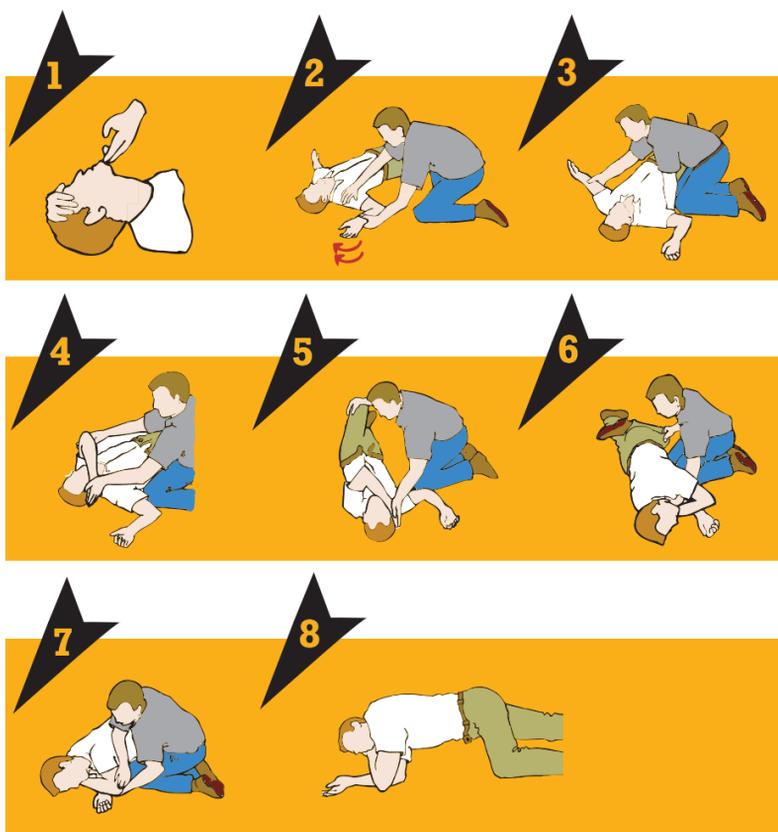
You should also call the Poison Control Centre (1-800-463-5060). If the incident occurs during business hours, you should call the nearest CLSC, as well.

Do not leave the person unattended while waiting for help to arrive.

Adult Recovery Position

The recovery position can prevent an unconscious person from choking to death on vomit by ensuring they are resting on their side and not on their back. When someone has passed out, but can still be roused, has good colour and is breathing easily, recovery position is the safest way for them to rest.

Follow the instructions to place a person in recovery position.



1. Check for consciousness. Loosen all collars, ties and belts to increase ventilation. With one hand on the forehead and the index and middle fingers of the other hand on the chin, tilt the head back to clear and check the airway. Keep your hand on the victim's forehead and, if necessary, use two fingers to remove anything blocking the airway. Be careful not to push it further into the throat.

2. Start with the victim on his or her back, legs straight and together, head straight. Kneeling next to the victim, place the near arm straight out from the body, slightly above shoulder level. Bend the elbow at a right angle, keeping the palm facing up.

3. Grab the far arm.

4. Position the hand over the near ear. Place your own hand over it, to hold and protect the head.

5. With your other hand, grab the victim's far leg behind the knee, bending it and lifting the leg so that the foot is flat on the ground.

6. Keeping your hand over the victim's to protect the head, gently roll the victim toward you by pulling the far knee over and to the ground. Position the leg at a right angle and keep it there by placing the foot against the knee of the straight leg.

7. Gently remove your hand from the victim's head, holding the elbow with your other hand.

8. Leave the victim in this position and monitor his or her breathing.

Cover the victim with a blanket or coat and watch for any changes in vital signs. Keep one hand on the abdomen at all times to monitor breathing until emergency assistance arrives.

WEB CAPSULE

One of Éduc'alcool's youth programs includes a capsule on drinking games. All the capsules in this program present stories in comic-strip form, "telling it like it is" about various situations. These are accompanied by explanations of the effects of alcohol on the body. You'll find the capsule (in French), called *Rien à gagner*, online at www.educalcool.qc.ca - À toi de jouer.

If you choose to drink, please drink responsibly and remember that moderation is always in good taste.



Moderation is always in good taste.