

## Alcohol (Ethanol)



**Brief Description:**

Ethanol is a drug available in many liquid forms that is legal to possess and consume by adults 21 years and older. It is one of the oldest and most socially accepted mood altering substances with traditional roles in many cultures and some religions.

**Street Names:**

Beer, wine, liquor, mixed drinks, cocktails, and many others.

**Effects:**

Ethanol is a central nervous system depressant. Initially, it causes loss of social inhibition and a mild euphoria or “buzz”. Further intoxication progressively leads to slurred speech, loss of balance and motor control, nausea and vomiting, respiratory depression, coma and death. Long-term use can lead to abuse and dependence, liver cirrhosis and liver cancer, pancreatitis, gastritis, and cardiomyopathy. Even small amounts of ethanol ingested during pregnancy can lead to fetal alcohol syndrome, resulting in permanent brain damage to the developing fetus, which leads to life long learning disabilities and behavioral problems in these children.

**Statistics and Trends:**

Driving under the influence of alcohol peaks between the ages of 21 and 25, with 27.9% in this age group reporting driving under the influence in the past one year.

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