

Alcohol

■ What happens when you drink alcohol?

When you drink alcohol, the majority is absorbed into your body by the stomach and small intestines, and accumulates in the liver. Inside the liver, the alcohol is converted to acetaldehyde and then to acetate (acetic acid). The acetate is further broken down into water and carbon dioxide inside muscle and fat tissue before being expelled from the body. However, from 2 to 10 percent of the alcohol you consume does not break down in this way, and is instead expelled as-is from your body in your breath, sweat, and urine.

■ Why do you get drunk when you drink alcohol?

Alcohol is transported throughout your body inside your bloodstream until it reaches your brain. The alcohol affects the cells in the brain, causing a numbing effect. The resulting sensation is what we refer to as being drunk.

■ I've heard that some people can drink alcohol, and some people can't...

Some people, based on their genetic makeup, are able to digest alcohol, while others cannot. Those who are unable to consume alcohol can experience headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, heart palpitations, and sometimes can even go into shock by just having a sip of alcohol. The best way to take care of yourself is to know your limits. You can take an alcohol patch test to find out if you have problems digesting alcohol or not.

* We offer the alcohol patch test at the Health Clinic, so feel free to come in and get tested if you have any concerns!

■ How long does it take for one to become sober again?

For a person with a body weight of about 60kg, **1 serving*** of alcohol consumed within 30 minutes stays in the body for approximately 3 to 4 hours. It can take approximately 6-7 hours for 2 servings of alcohol to leave the body. The time it takes varies from individual to individual; in particular, women and those with a lower alcohol tolerance may take longer to get sober. Drinking late into the night can leave alcohol still in your system when you wake up the next morning, which is the main cause of hangovers.

* 1 serving is approximately 20 to 25g of pure alcohol.

■ Appropriate amounts, alcohol percentage, and energy quantity

Considering that there are differences from person to person, and even the same person will be able to handle different amounts on different days, it is impossible to give a specific answer as to how much is appropriate for someone to drink, but in general we recommend that you limit yourself to 1 or 2 servings of alcohol in one sitting. If you are female or a weak drinker, please consider drinking even less.

Amount of Alcohol in One Standard Serving*

Beer (5% ABV)		1 bottle (500ml)
Japanese rice wine (sake) (15% ABV)		1 cup (180ml)
Shochu (25% ABV)		.6 glass (110ml)
Whiskey (43% ABV)		1 glass (60ml)
Wine (14% ABV)		1/4 bottle (180ml)
Can Chu-hi (5% ABV)		1.5 cans (520ml)

* Amount of alcohol shown as percent of alcohol by volume.

■ Be extra careful of chugging drinks!

There are times when drinking with friends or at parties where people might encourage or push each other to chug their drinks. When chugging (drinking very quickly), a large amount of alcohol is ingested in a short period of time, which can lead to **acute alcohol poisoning*** and may even lead to death.

* What is acute alcohol poisoning?

When you drink a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time, your liver is not able to properly metabolize the alcohol you have consumed, and more alcohol stays in your blood. When the concentration of blood alcohol suddenly rises, you may experience confusion or clouded consciousness, breathing paralysis, or you could choke on your own vomit which could kill you.



If any of the following symptoms occur, immediately call an ambulance:

1. Loss of consciousness: The person does not wake up even if you pinch or shake them.
2. Their whole body becomes cold.
3. Their breathing becomes strange. (Slow, shallow, or erratic/irregular breathing.)
4. Large amounts of vomit and/or bleeding.
5. Loss of bladder or bowel control.

As a basic courtesy, be considerate of others when drinking, and don't force them to drink too much!



REMEMBER!

- * It is illegal for people under the age of 20 to consume alcohol in Japan.
- * Driving under the influence of alcohol in Japan is met with very strict punishments.
At APU, those caught driving under the influence may be expelled from the university.