## Alcohol's effect on sex

**Low Dose:** BAC = 0 - .05  
(1-3 drinks per occasion by weight and gender)  
- inhibitions relaxed:  
  - judgement is altered  
  - some people are able to overcome shyness  
  - easier to take risks  
  - easier to talk about self  
  - more comfortable touching and being touched  
- greater feelings of a sexual nature  
- expectation of alcohol's effects influences behavior regardless of specific BAC as long as it is at low doses  
- actual physiological response may or may not influence behavior, depending on the expectation of individual.

**High Dose:** BAC = .10 and above  
(6+ drinks per occasion by weight and gender)  
- loss of coordination  
- reduced reaction time  
- noticeable clumsiness  
- body is less ready for sex  
  - decreased blood flow to sex organs  
  - less intense orgasm (subjective)  
  - orgasm takes longer to reach  
  - more likely to experience unintended or unwanted sex (i.e. STI, pregnancy or sexual assault)  
- men: longer time needed for erection and ejaculation  
- women: decreased vaginal lubrication  

**Note:** This chart only addresses the effects of low and high doses of alcohol on sex. The effects of moderate doses of alcohol are too difficult to predict because of individual variations.

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### Men vs. Women

#### Physical Gender Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size/Weight</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually weigh more, so more alcohol is required to maintain the same BAC as someone who weighs less.</td>
<td>Usually weigh less, so less alcohol is required to maintain the same BAC as someone who weighs more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Volume</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More blood per pound of body weight</td>
<td>Less blood per pound of body weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is more diluted in men than in women.</td>
<td>Alcohol is less diluted in women than in men.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stomach Enzyme</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher concentration of enzyme present</td>
<td>Lower concentration of enzyme present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some alcohol is metabolized in his stomach, so less of the alcohol that he consumes is absorbed into his bloodstream.</td>
<td>Very little alcohol is metabolized in her stomach, so most of the alcohol that she consumes gets into her bloodstream.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A 200 pound person who drinks twice as much as a 100 pound person will experience the same level of intoxication.

A 150 pound man who drinks the same amount as a 150 pound woman will have a lower BAC.

A 150 pound man who drinks the same amount as a 150 pound woman will have a lower BAC.

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Consuming or possessing alcohol under the age of 21 is illegal in Illinois.
niu survey statistics

Most women drank 0 - 4 drinks the last time they "partied."
Most men drank 0 - 6 drinks the last time they "partied."

Based on survey data from random sample of NIU students, Spring 2009 N=640 Women - 65% Men 58%

Although a serious problem for those affected, reports of negative consequences related to alcohol are infrequent among NIU students. (19% reported having unprotected sex and 39% reported doing something they later regretted as a consequence of drinking.)

sober sex is safer sex

For people who practice safer sex by using a condom, "putting one on" while intoxicated could be especially challenging. Just imagine what sex under those conditions might look like. On second thought, nevermind. Mixing alcohol and sex can be enjoyable, regrettable, or somewhere in between. The key to the combination is:

The positive effects of alcohol work only at lower dose levels.

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safer sex alternatives

- go to dinner, a movie, a park, or any place where alcohol is not the main focus of the event
- try sex after 1 - 3 drinks (depending on size, gender etc...) or with no alcohol at all
- if you have already had a few drinks and you want to “enjoy just one more drink,” have it after sex
- communicate openly with your partner about your sexual intentions, desires, and expectations
- remember that alcohol affects men and women differently
- don’t settle for “sex while intoxicated”
- read up on and experiment with other ways of having a satisfying sexual experience besides intercourse:
  - sexual touching, massage, mutual masturbation, etc...all may be used in addition to or instead of intercourse
  - mutually exploring different and varied sexual behaviors can have a positive and enhancing effect on an intimate relationship

Sex or gender issues related to ALCOHOLISM have not been addressed in this handout. Addiction to alcohol results in a variety of effects not seen in users who are not addicted.

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