

## Alcohol Use

### Section Summary

- Excess alcohol consumption has been linked to high blood pressure, liver disease, stroke, heart problems, cancer and reduced immune functioning.
  - Both high blood pressure and strokes increase the risk of developing dementia.
  - Drinking alcohol increases risk of injuries, including traumatic brain injury which increases the risk of dementia.
  - Adults aged 45-65 who drink over 21 units of alcohol (~12 drinks) per week are at a 20% greater risk of developing dementia.
  - Those with alcohol use disorder are three times more likely to develop early onset dementia.
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## Activities

### Activity One: Circle the Problem

- Screen share, print or draw the organ diagram provided in the “Additional Resources” of this guide.
- Have participants take turns circling organs/body systems that may be negatively impacted by heavy alcohol consumption.
- Once you have finished circling all the affected organs/body systems, have the group identify the alcohol associated diseases/symptoms linked to it.
  - I.e. The brain and depression.
  - There is a organ diagram, as well as a list provided in the “Additional Resources” section of this guide so you can check your work.

## Activity Two: Sober Fun

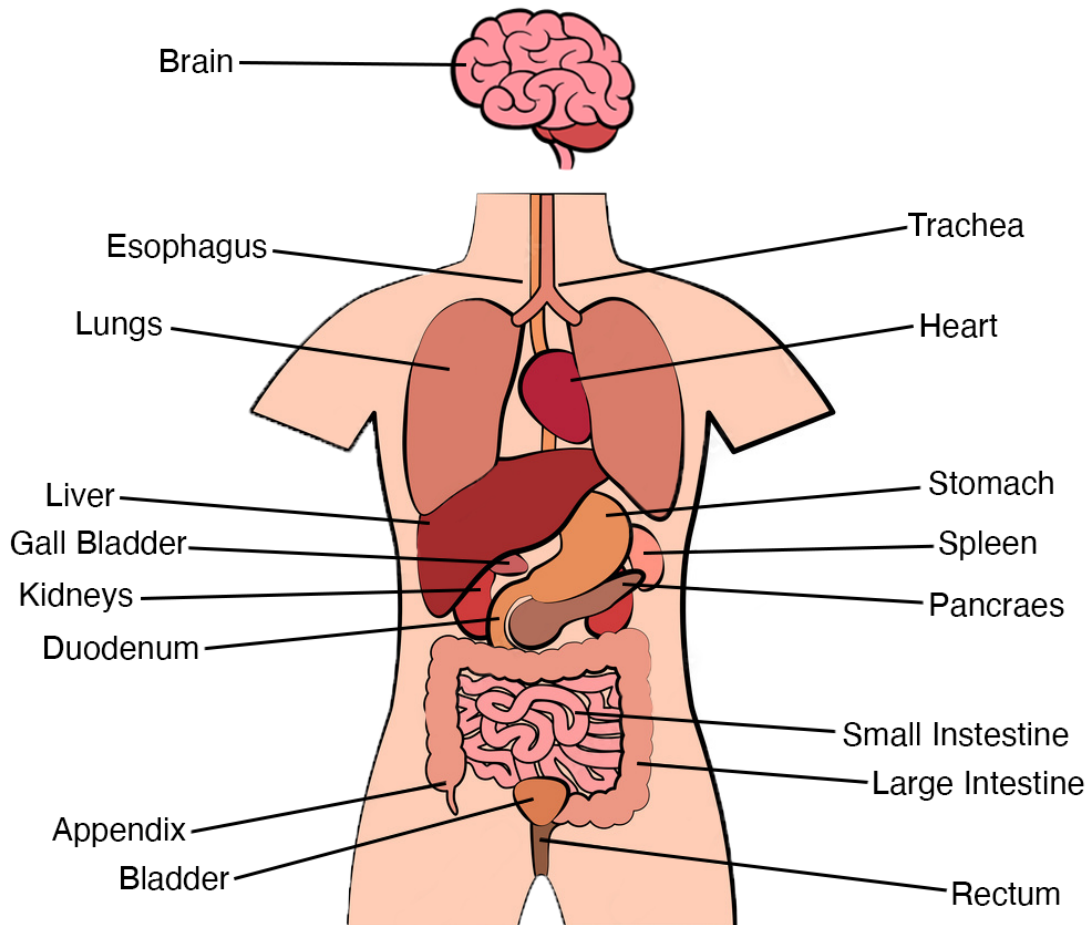
- As a group create two lists together.
  - List A will be a list of social activities that can be done or places that can be visited as an alternative to having a drink or going out to a bar.
    - Maybe bowling or going hiking.
  - List B will be a list of social activities or places that encourage low risk drinking behaviors (where you can drink but would be likely to stay below the limit).
    - Maybe playing a board game that requires focus, like scrabble.

## Discussion Questions

- What aspects of our culture encourage drinking?
  - For example, consider the role of drinking in movies, TV shows, and advertisements.
- Have you encountered a situation where you think alcohol misuse has negatively impacted an individual's life?

## Additional Resources

### Organ Diagram



### Associated diseases/symptoms

#### Brain/Head:

##### Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Slurred speech
- Vision impairment
- Anxiety
- Extreme mood shifts
- Memory lapses

##### Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Brain damage
- Depression

## Heart:

Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Increased heart rate
- Expanded blood vessels

Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Cardiomyopathy (stretching and drooping of the heart muscle)
- Arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat)
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Hypertension

## Lungs:

Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Slowed breathing

Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Acute respiratory distress syndrome
- Pneumonia

## Liver:

Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Liver inflammation

Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Fatty liver
- Alcoholic hepatitis
- Fibrosis
- Cirrhosis
- Liver cancer

## Pancreas:

Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Production of toxic substances

Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Pancreatitis

## Stomach/Large Intestine/Small Intestine:

Short term symptoms of alcohol use:

- Acid reflux
- Diarrhea

Long term/extreme symptoms of alcohol abuse:

- Gut leakiness
- Microbial dysbiosis
- Colorectal cancer