

ALCOHOL AND THE BODY

At least 12 areas of the human systems are slowly destroyed by the alcohol menace.

BLOOD – Alcohol causes red blood cells to clump together, slowing circulation and depriving tissues of oxygen. Causes anaemia by reducing production of red blood cells.

BONE TISSUE – Alcohol creates “drunken cells” which form brittle bones. Researchers know that falls can cause broken bones in alcoholics more frequently than others. It can reduce production of red and white blood cells in the bone marrow.

BRAIN – Alcohol kills brain cells. The body can replace lost cells but it never grows new brain cells. Any brain damage is permanent. It causes small brain haemorrhages. Ultimately it causes the brain to shrink and become spongy. Personality can change.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM – These specialized organs (adrenals, ovaries and testes, pancreas, parathyroids, pineal, pituitary and thyroid) that manufacture hormones and secrete them into the bloodstream and maintain our internal environment are adversely impaired by alcohol.

HANDS AND FEET – Alcohol causes polyneuritis, or inflammation of the nerves, resulting from vitamin deficiencies, which alcoholics invariably have. Polyneuritis causes burning and prickly sensations in the hands and feet.

HEART – Alcohol has a toxic effect on the heart, finally causing irreversible damage to the heart muscle. Drinking daily for as little as 2 years causes increased amounts of fat to collect in the heart and disturbs its normal metabolism.

INFECTION – Alcohol lowers the body’s resistance to disease by decreasing the production of both red and white blood cells in the bone marrow.

LIVER – Cirrhosis, a degeneration of healthy liver tissue into scar tissue, occurs eight times more often in alcoholics than among non-drinkers. Consistent social drinkers have increased liver fat and damage to liver cells.

LUNGS – Alcohol has a toxic (poisonous) effect on the lungs.

PANCREAS – Excessive use of alcohol causes inflammation of the pancreas. Once inflamed it may not fully recover. In acute forms the pancreas haemorrhages, usually resulting in death.

SEX GLANDS – Premature senility, including dysfunction and degeneration of the sex glands, results from alcoholism. Shakespeare was right when he said that drink “provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance.”

SMALL INTESTINE – Alcohol blocks absorption of various substances such as folic acid, xylose, fat, the B vitamins and amino acids – essential for our health.

The only way out for our systems and those of our young people is to stay away from alcohol. It’s much more than a simple matter of willpower. There must be a combination of mental, physical and spiritual powers to help the alcoholic recover from its addiction. An alcoholic who gets help early has the best chance.

Condensed from “Alcohol and the Body”, Fight Against Alcoholism magazine, Philippines, Joy Butler