

Adverse Effects of Alcohol for Sport

Alcohol consumption is detrimental to sports performance because of the ways it affects the body physically and its adverse effects on the brain's function, during and after consumption. If you enjoy playing sport, it is especially important to understand these effects:



1. Dehydration

ALCOHOL MAKES YOU SWEAT MORE, AND IT IS A DIURETIC, WHICH MEANS IT CAUSES THE BODY TO PASS MORE LIQUID THROUGH URINATION; THESE EFFECTS LEAVE YOU DEHYDRATED.



2. Nausea

ALCOHOL INCREASES THE PRODUCTION OF GASTRIC ACID AND IRRITATES THE STOMACH LINING, RESULTING IN NAUSEA OR VOMITING.



3. Fatigue

ALCOHOL DEPRESSES THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, HAVING A SEDATIVE EFFECT WHICH LEAVES YOU FEELING TIRED AND DROWSY.



4. Confusion and Memory problems

ALCOHOL AFFECTS YOUR ABILITY TO LEARN NEW INFORMATION BY INTERFERING WITH HOW NERVES COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER IN A PART OF THE BRAIN CALLED THE HIPPOCAMPUS.



5. Coordination

ALCOHOL INTERFERES WITH THE BRAIN'S COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS, INCLUDING THE SIGNALS FROM THE BRAIN TO MUSCLE. IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT ALCOHOL IMPAIRS COORDINATION OF COMPLEX MOVEMENTS.



6. Anxiety and Depression

ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE BRAIN LEVELS OF SEROTONIN, WHICH IS PART OF THE BRAIN'S MOOD CONTROL SYSTEM; ALTHOUGH ALCOHOL CAN PROVIDE A SHORT-TERM MOOD BOOST, IT TYPICALLY CAUSES LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION OVER TIME. THIS IS WHY PEOPLE OFTEN REPORT IMPROVED WELLBEING AFTER QUITTING OR CUTTING BACK THEIR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

More information: www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/alcohol

Need some Help?

WHETHER YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT YOURSELF OR SOMEBODY ELSE, HERE ARE SOME HELPLINES AND SUPPORT GROUPS OFFERING EXPERT ADVICE AND HELP WHENEVER YOU NEED IT:

- Breathing Space: www.breathingspace.scot

A free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Helpline: 080 083 8587.

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Charity providing advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Infoline: 0300 123 3393. Online chat is available on the website.

- Nacoo: www.nacoo.org.uk

Providing information, advice and support for everyone affected by a parent's drinking. Helpline: 0800 358 3456.

- Samaritans: www.samaritans.org

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Helpline: 116 123.

- Scottish Families affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD): www.sfad.org.uk

SFAD is a national charity that supports anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use in Scotland. Helpline: 08080 10 10 11.

- We are with you: www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Get free, confidential support with alcohol, drugs or mental health from one of our local services or online. Online chat available.

SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
www.shaap.org.uk