



FACT SHEET

Brain Injury & Alcohol

***Do you
have
trouble
with
alcohol
since
your
brain
injury?***

What does this mean?

After a traumatic brain injury (TBI), many people notice their brains are more sensitive to alcohol. More simply stated, alcohol is a toxin to brain cells and can impede brain recovery processes.

How might use of alcohol affect recovery after a brain injury?

Drinking increases the chance of getting injured again, making cognitive (thinking) problems worse, and increases the chance of having emotional problems such as depression. In addition, drinking can reduce brain injury recovery. For these reasons, staying away from alcohol is strongly recommended to avoid further injury to the brain and to promote as much healing as possible.

Common examples of alcohol difficulties:

Alcohol use creates a greater risk of:

- ◆ Seizures.
- ◆ Another traumatic brain injury.
- ◆ Cognitive impairment.
- ◆ Depression.
- ◆ Sexual dysfunction.

Recommended strategies:

There are many ways to stop using alcohol or other drugs and many ways to reduce the potential for harm. Here are few:

- ◆ Don't underestimate your ability to change your alcohol use if you want to.
- ◆ Cut down or stop drinking.
- ◆ Ask for family members' help.
- ◆ Talk to your doctor.
- ◆ Seek professional help, such as addictions counseling or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Sources: IU School of Medicine / Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana TBI Model Systems. Further, the information in this FACT SHEET is also based on a consensus of expert opinion of the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Departments of Neuropsychology and Resource Facilitation.

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace advice from a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatments.

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