

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Drunk and drugged driving awareness month: Do you know the healthy guidelines?

According to StopDruggedDriving.org, 20 percent of crashes in the country are caused by drivers under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Intoxicated drivers cause approximately 440,000 injuries, 6,761 deaths, and $59.9 billion in damages per year. Due to the vast magnitude of this issue, spreading awareness and educating on prevention is essential. The most effective way to prevent driving while intoxicated is to develop a knowledge base on legal limits as well as overall safe drinking habits.

In the U.S. a driver is considered impaired if his blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is above a 0.08. Your BAC is the percentage of alcohol found in your bloodstream. Your BAC level will remain within safe limits if you consume only one “standard” drink per hour. A standard drink is defined by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) as half an ounce of alcohol (e.g., one 12 oz. beer, one 5 oz. glass of wine, or one 1.5 oz. shot of distilled liquor). The following are factors that can affect your BAC so be mindful:

- Age & gender
- Rate of consumption
- Strength of the drink as well as carbonation
- Body type & fat/muscle content
- Emotional state
- Medications you are taking
- Hydration level & amount of food consumed
- Tolerance

There are several different ways people track their BAC including self-assessment, only consuming one drink per hour, weight charts, and breathalyzer. Sticking to one drink per hour is not always easy and estimate your blood alcohol level based on weight is not always accurate. In order to reliably know your BAC either abstain from alcohol or utilize a breathalyzer.

Know Healthy Drinking Guidelines:

- For women, low risk drinking limits are no more than 3 in a day or 7 in a week
- For men, low risk drinking limits are no more than 4 in a day or 14 in a week

Not meeting the healthy guidelines or feeling concerned about your drinking habits?

Contact your EAP! There are trained professional counselors answering the phone 24/7 who can assist you in assessing your alcohol use and determining the proper treatment intervention.

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