

KNOW WHAT'S UP INTOXICATION AND RISK

In the spotlight: alcohol



<p>Substance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The substance colloquially referred to as 'alcohol' is ethanol; other alcohols such as methanol or glycol are highly toxic even in small quantities. • Ethanol is a clear liquid produced by fermenting sugar from a number of different base materials. • Ethanol is a psychoactive and carcinogenic neurotoxin.
<p>Method of consumption & Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Method of consumption:</u> Ethanol is contained in drinks at various levels (indicated as percentage by volume, vol%). • Beer (4-8 vol%), wine and sparkling wine (10-13 vol%), schnaps (30-45 vol%) • The subjective <u>effects mainly depend on the amount consumed, but physical and mental condition as well as habituation to consumption also play a role.</u> • Consumed in small quantities, alcohol has a disinhibiting effect, usually increasing sociability. • When consumed in larger quantities, alcohol causes severe impairment of perception and attention, and coordination and speech become increasingly affected. • Ultimately, alcohol leads to tiredness and lightheadedness which may end in a loss of consciousness when consuming large amounts.
<p>Mixed consumption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with drugs • Significant side effects when consumed together with cannabis • Alcohol should not be consumed together with energy drinks, as caffeine masks the fatigue-inducing effects of alcohol. This can lead to an overestimation of one's physical performance and an increased readiness to take risks. It can also cause additional impairment of certain brain functions, such as visual-spatial perception and language skills.
<p>Legal appraisal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sale of alcohol to young people under the age of 16 and consumption in public is prohibited under section 9 of the Youth Protection Act. • In the presence of a legal guardian, young people aged 14 and over may consume brewed alcoholic beverages in restaurants. • From the age of 16, fermented beverages (beer, beer-based mixed drinks, sparkling wine, wine) may be purchased and consumed in public. • From the age of 18, spirits or mixed drinks containing distilled alcohol (various types of schnaps, cocktails, etc) may be purchased. • In road traffic with motor vehicles: For young people, the 0.0 per mille limit applies until their 21st birthday, and it applies during the probationary period. • For bicyclists, the limit for absolute unfitness to ride is 1.6 per mille. As bicycles are not motor vehicles, the 0.0 per mille limit does not apply to young people in this case. • Please note: the same rules apply to e-scooters as to driving motor vehicles; the 0.0 per mille limit applies to drivers under the age of 21.



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<p>Acute risks & Long-term effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Acute risks</u> are most notably linked to higher amounts of alcohol consumption; a blood alcohol level of approx. 1 per mille is considered to be intoxication. • In a state of intoxication, spatial vision and orientation are impaired, and reaction times are also significantly affected. This makes accidents more likely to happen, which is also exacerbated by the more reckless behaviour associated with intoxication. • Heavy drinking is associated with violence. • Consumption at a young age increases the risk of psychological harm and addiction: those who start before the age of 15 are about four times more likely to become addicted. • Long-term damage to the developing brain (e.g. hippocampus) • <u>Long-term effects</u>: Alcohol distributes throughout the body via the bloodstream so that prolonged alcohol abuse can damage almost all organs. • Prolonged alcohol abuse can impact concentration and memory.
<p>Prevention & Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no risk-free level of alcohol consumption. The German Nutrition Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung e. V.) recommends abstaining from alcohol altogether. However, if you do wish to drink alcohol, you should avoid consuming large amounts and heavy drinking. • With alcohol being omnipresent in society, people often take an uncritical approach to it. It is helpful to engage in open dialogue with young people and work together to develop a critical attitude and rules for consumption. • HaLT is a local alcohol prevention programme that's running in over 150 places across Germany.
<p>Statistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, 6.9 per cent of female and 12.4 per cent of male 12- to 17-year-olds drink alcohol on a regular basis (at least once a week). Compared to 2004, these figures have more than halved.

Sources

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In the spotlight: energy drinks

Substance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy drinks are lemonades containing caffeine. • They contain a lot of caffeine (~80 mg per 250 ml can), sugar, taurine, glucuronolactone, and inositol • For children and adolescents, the limit is 3 mg per kilogram of body weight per day. However, recent study results suggest that this limit should be critically reviewed. • For healthy adults, the daily dose limit is 400 mg. • Energy drinks have a maximum amount of 32 mg per 100 ml.
Method of consumption & Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Effects:</u> The stimulating and invigorating effect is chiefly due to the high amounts of caffeine and sugar, as well as other additives. • Undesirable side effects of caffeine may include: palpitations, cardiac arrhythmia, nervousness, insomnia, headaches, feeling sick, sweating, and perceptual disturbances. • A 250 ml can contains approximately 80 mg of caffeine, which is equivalent to about one cup of coffee. However, several cans are often consumed in short order, increasing the risk of side effects.
Mixed consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy drinks should not be consumed together with alcohol, as caffeine masks alcohol's tiring effects. This can lead to one's physical performance being overestimated and an increased readiness to take risks. It can also cause additional impairment of certain brain functions, such as visual-spatial perception or language skills. • Interaction with other party drugs can lead to severe cardiac arrhythmia.
Legal appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the caffeine content exceeds 150 mg per litre, the drink must carry the warning 'High caffeine. Not recommended for children or pregnant or breastfeeding women'. • To date, there is no ban on sales to minors in Germany, while other countries have age limits for sales between 15 and 18 years. • Many outlets have introduced an age limit for energy drinks under their house rules.



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Acute risks & Long-term effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive consumption may have an adverse effect on the cardiovascular system: abnormal heart rhythm, increased blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmia, and kidney failure.• People with a predisposition to certain heart conditions may be more sensitive to caffeine consumption.
Prevention & Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The WHO, BfR and consumer organisations are calling for age restrictions and better labelling.• Minors with known cardiac arrhythmia should not consume energy drinks altogether.
Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just under two thirds of all adolescents have consumed energy drinks.

Sources

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