



ALCOHOL AND ACADEMICS



Research regarding the effects of alcohol on academic performance reports some type of negative consequences.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH HEAVY EPISODIC DRINKING:

- Alcohol impairs the ability to transfer information - learned prior to drinking - from short term to long term memory.
- Attention span may be shortened within 48 hours after drinking.
- Alcohol disrupts the necessary sleep cycle, including REM sleep. Without adequate quality of sleep, a student will feel tired, despite sleeping for 7-8 hours.
- The time it takes to recover from heavy drinking (i.e. hangover) could be better spent on more important tasks (i.e. learning)

IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Information a student studies before drinking is harder to recall
- Harder to pay attention in class and concentrate on work
- When sleep is disrupted a person is more susceptible to depression disorders and a decrease in cognitive abilities. Studies show that normal memory function (learning) is dependent on adequate sleep.
- Heavy drinking often results in missing classes and falling behind in assignments.

STEPS TO MINIMIZING NEGATIVE EFFECTS:

- Balance academic and social commitments
- Manage time, giving priority to academics
- Drink responsibly and in moderation

Sources:

- *Academics and Drinking*, Available at <http://www.alcohol.vt.edu/Student/Choices/academics.htm>
- National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism, *Alcohol Alert No. 29-1995*, Available at <http://silk/naaa1/publication/aa29.htm>
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, *Alcohol and Sleep*. Available at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>.