



Berrien County Health Department:

Preventing Disease, Prolonging Life and Protecting the Health of the Community.



Alcohol Awareness

Many myths exist about the effects of alcohol on specific individuals. “Whiskey makes me angry,” “Wine gives me a headache,” “I never get drunk off beer,” “Don’t mix clear and colored liquors.” All of these statements hold some merit because every “body” is different. However, there are some universal truths about alcohol.

Many people mistake one glass as a single serving of alcohol. Actually 12 ounces of beer (regular size can or bottle), 1 ¼ ounces of liquor (one standard

shot glass), and 5 ounces of wine (standard wine glass ¾ full) all have the same amount of pure alcohol. The only differences in these three types of alcoholic drinks are other additives.

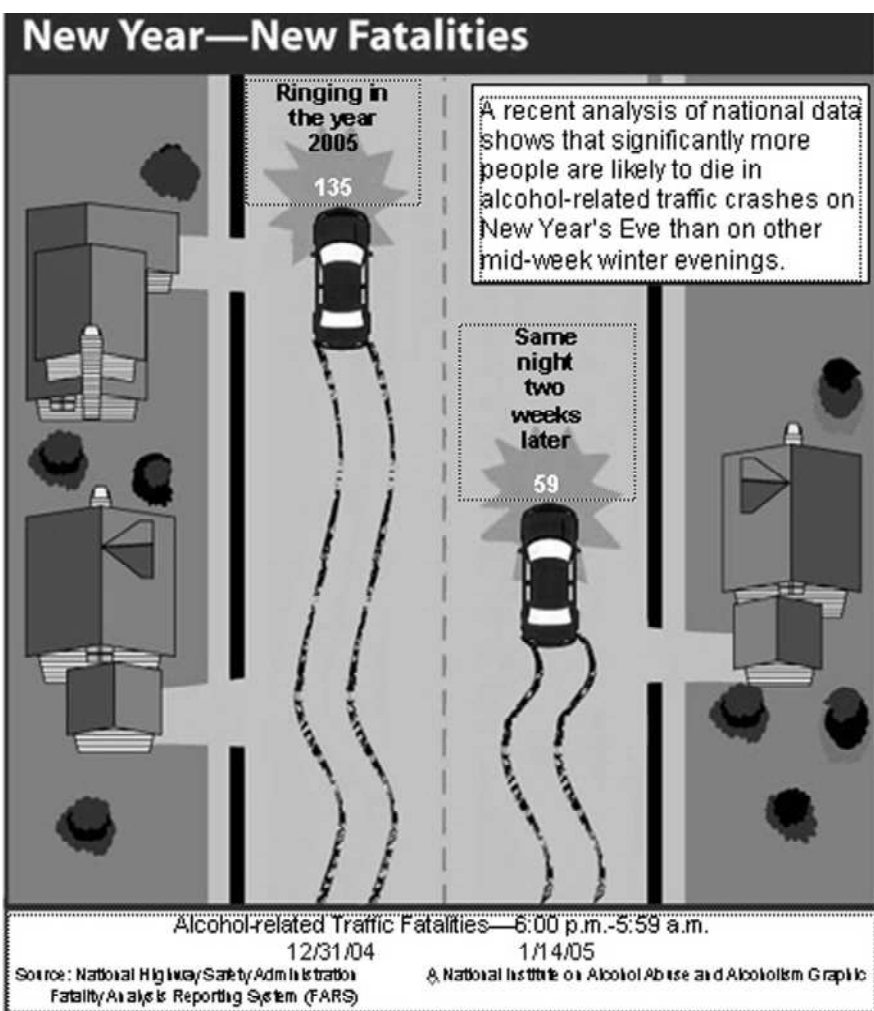
Whenever a person consumes one alcoholic drink their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) goes up. Consuming more drinks forces the BAC higher. In Michigan, the legal BAC limit is .08%. The average person requires one hour to process a single drink of alcohol out of the body. This time can be dif-

ferent for different people. Women tend to process alcohol a little more slowly than men, and older adults will process alcohol slower than younger adults. In any person, too much alcohol can be extremely toxic to a human body. Consuming too much alcohol (binge drinking, for example) actually causes the body to turn off, depressing the lungs, brain, and heart until they cannot function enough to keep a person alive.

In Michigan it is illegal for a person under 21 years old to drink any alcohol. If a person is caught with a BAC .08% or above they can be taken to jail. If they are caught operating a vehicle with a high BAC they can be prosecuted for Operating While Impaired (OWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI). Each of these offences carries heavy fines and penalties.

People can make bad decisions when they drink too much. Along with the health problems that come from drinking in excess, the decisions a person makes when drinking can have lasting effects. Impaired judgment can lead to violence, unwanted sexual encounters, spouse or child abuse, and driving while drunk to name a few.

While the myths are abundant, the truths give you the information you need to use — and not abuse — alcohol. Remember, you can always choose not to drink! If you do drink, always have a designated driver. If you are asked to be the driver, take your turn- your friends will owe you one!



Each year, alcohol related traffic fatalities on New Year’s Eve are up to four times higher than a similar night in the winter (see graphic above). Remember the facts about alcohol, and take extra caution on the roads that night.

Special thanks to Nate Hill, Prevention Specialist, for his help with this article!

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor	M-139 Office	School Based	Niles	Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohthdept.org

Stepping Up to a Healthier You!

December is Stepping Up to A Healthier You month. This month, the health department will bring you information about topics to keep you healthy during the hectic holiday season, including: Stress Management, Winter Safety, Healthy Eating for Christmas, and Alcohol Awareness. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at **926-7121**.

REMEMBER...

If you are a person who chooses to drink, you carry a large responsibility on your shoulders. It is the decisions you make while drinking that could impact your future and the futures of the people around you. If you choose to drink - be responsible.

Some ways to limit intoxication include:

- Drink a non-alcoholic beverage between alcoholic drinks
- Eat a balanced meal before drinking
- Limit yourself and stick to it

Remember, once you are intoxicated, only time can make you sober again! Caffeine will not make you sober— only more alert.

The Health Department wishes you a



For more information about alcohol issues or the Berrien County Alcohol Taskforce, call Nate Hill at the Berrien County Health Department at 927-5698.

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