

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SEX AND ALCOHOL?



## KNOW WHAT YOU'RE CONSUMING

### WHAT IS A "STANDARD DRINK?"

A standard drink is typically the amount of alcohol that the body can process in an hour. The following chart provides some guidance around common drinks and their alcohol content:



12oz beer

10oz malt liquor

4-5oz wine

1.5oz 80 proof liquor

1oz 100 proof liquor

0.5oz Bacardi 151

## A PLACE TO CHECK IN

O.P.E.N. offers students confidential check-ins, non-judgmental conversations about drug and alcohol use. Check-ins may be in a small group with other NU students or with an individual staff member. You can get personalized feedback about your use of alcohol or other drugs. Check-ins are not about telling anyone what they should or shouldn't do. We encourage students to make informed decisions and strive to reduce harm that can be associated with alcohol and other drug use and abuse.

To learn more or to set up a check-in appointment visit  
[www.northeastern.edu/OPEN](http://www.northeastern.edu/OPEN)



OFFICE OF PREVENTION & EDUCATION AT NORTHEASTERN

We encourage students to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drug use and strive to reduce the harm and negative consequences that can be associated with substance use and abuse.

[www.northeastern.edu/open](http://www.northeastern.edu/open) | [open@neu.edu](mailto:open@neu.edu) | 617-373-4459 |  

## ALCOHOL AND SEX



## GET SMART, CHOOSE SMART.

A confidential, non-judgmental resource for students.



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Ell Hall - Room 307  
[www.northeastern.edu/open](http://www.northeastern.edu/open)



"My check-in was eye-opening. Talking about issues related to alcohol without risk of getting in trouble was a great resource."



Northeastern

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# HOW CAN ALCOHOL AFFECT YOUR ACTIONS?

What decisions will you make for yourself around drinking and sex? What precautions should you take to ensure your health and safety? What are the potential long-term implications of combining alcohol and decisions around sex for you and your partner? This brochure is intended to help Northeastern students get at some of the facts around the combination of alcohol and sex in order to make informed decisions.

**Alcohol DOES NOT make sex more enjoyable.**  
Alcohol actually numbs the nerve endings of both male and female genitalia. It also decreases female lubrication which can lead to painful sex.<sup>4</sup>

**Drinking DOES NOT enhance sexual experience.**  
Alcohol can increase one's expectations for the sexual experience, yet decrease desire, arousal, and satisfaction in both genders.

**HOW DOES ALCOHOL AFFECT DECISION-MAKING?**  
Alcohol is a depressant. It slows brain activity and causes impairment to judgment, memory, vision, speech, and gross motor skills. These impairments can depend on how many drinks are consumed on a given occasion, as well as the frequency of consumption.<sup>7</sup> Alcohol and drug use can inhibit clear thinking and decision-making skills, leading to unintended sexual activity or decision not to use protection.<sup>4</sup>



## DID YOU KNOW...

Alcohol is the most common drug used to perpetrate sexual assault and rape

- DID YOU KNOW...**
- Alcohol can decrease motor function so that it may be difficult to use a condom or another barrier method of contraception correctly.
  - Alcohol can make talking and listening more difficult and impact communication around the decision to have sex.
  - Each year an estimated 400,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 have unprotected sex, and more than 100,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex.<sup>1</sup>

## MAKING CLEARLY INFORMED CHOICES

In various ways, people behave differently under the influence of alcohol. Whether that means we don't "act like ourselves" or we compromise our decision-making ability, it's a scientific fact that we are all affected. Beginning at a .06, Blood Alcohol Content (BAC), judgment becomes impaired. A higher BAC will result in more cognitive and physical impairment.

Heavier drinking episodes are defined as drinking to intoxication; this typically correlates with five or more standard drinks (for men) and four or more standard drinks for women. (See chart.)

**UNPLANNED SEXUAL ACTIVITY**  
People who frequently engage in heavy drinking episodes are 34% more likely to participate in unplanned sexual activity than those who do not engage in heavy drinking episodes.<sup>2</sup>

**ALCOHOL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT**  
Consent is an agreement reached by both partners to engage in a specific activity. Engaging in sexual activity without consent is an act of sexual violence and is illegal. Under Massachusetts law, consent cannot be given by an intoxicated person.

- DID YOU KNOW...**
- Alcohol is involved in 9 out of 10 campus rapes, having been used by either or both parties.
  - Alcohol is the most common drug used to perpetrate sexual assault and rape.<sup>1</sup>
  - One in five college women experience an attempted or completed rape during college.<sup>3</sup>

## OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

**ViSION (Violence Support, Intervention, and Outreach Network)**  
A network of campus and community allies focused on providing prevention, response and education for sexual assault and all types of violence, for Northeastern students.  
vision@neu.edu

**UHCS (University Health and Counseling Services)**  
Resources to help you stay healthy—physically and mentally and for care when you are ill or injured, or depressed or stressed.  
617-373-2772 [www.northeastern.edu/UHCS](http://www.northeastern.edu/UHCS)

**NU Public Safety**  
Members of the Northeastern community are encouraged to report crimes, abuse, harassing phone calls, suspicious activity or other emergencies immediately to the Northeastern University Police. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.  
617-373-2121 [www.northeastern.edu/publicsafety](http://www.northeastern.edu/publicsafety)

**WEBSITES:**  
[www.factsontap.org](http://www.factsontap.org)  
Non-judgmental facts about alcohol, drugs, and sex

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)  
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

[www.bacchusgamma.org](http://www.bacchusgamma.org)  
Peer education initiative addressing campus health and safety issues

[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)  
Research-based information on issues related to alcohol abuse and binge drinking among college students

## DID YOU KNOW...

Alcohol can make talking and listening more difficult and impact communication around the decision to have sex.



"It was enjoyable. Wasn't like any other drug course where they shove facts down your throat that don't affect you directly."

NORTHEASTERN STUDENTS  
WEIGH-IN



"My meeting at O.P.E.N. was very helpful and interesting. I didn't feel like I needed to withhold information because they weren't going to get me in trouble or scold me for my habits. Definitely a good program."

"O.P.E.N. is a way for students to reflect on habits that may affect short-term and/or long-term goals. Walking out of the appointment I felt like my head was truly on straight and that I was on the right path not only with my education and starting a career, but also with how I deal with and control certain desires or distractions."

FOOTNOTES: **1** Hingson, R.W.; Heeren, T.; Zakocs, R.C.; et al. Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students ages 18–24. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 63(2):136–144, 2002. **2** NIAAA. (2005) High-risk drinking in college: What we know and what we need to learn. **3** CDC. (2009) Understanding sexual violence fact sheet. **4** The BACCHUS Network. (2009) Smarter sex. **5** American College Health Association. (2010) National College Health Assessment, Spring 2010. **6** Northeastern University 2014 National College Health Assessment **7** NIAAA (2004). Alcohol's Damaging Effects on the Brain.

1. What percentage of NU students drank alcohol in the last month?  
A. 90%    B. 85%    C. 76%
2. What percentage of NU students report having had sexual intercourse in the last 30 days?  
A. 75%    B. 65%    C. 52%
3. How many NU students report abandoning safe sex practices when intoxicated?  
A. 1 in 15    B. 1 in 10    C. 1 in 5
4. What percentage of NU students have suffered memory loss due to excessive drinking?  
A. 25%    B. 18%    C. 38%

## O.P.E.N. is here for you

Alcohol and drug "check-ins"—confidential, non-judgmental (We don't tell you what you "should" or "shouldn't" do.)

Personalized feedback about your use, including how you compare to other students

Resources, information and tips – drawn from facts and evidence