

the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q What should I do if a friend passes out from drinking too much alcohol?

A. Recognizing that your friend may need help and being willing and able to lend a hand is a big first step. Because alcohol is a depressant, it has a sedative effect on the body, causing many physiological functions to slow down. This is the reason why alcohol makes you feel sleepy over the long-term. Although people sometimes use the terms interchangeably, “passing out” and “crashing after a late night” are two very different things. “Passing out” occurs when a part of the brain shuts down after heavy alcohol use and an individual loses consciousness. This is the body’s way of preventing more alcohol from being consumed. Being aware of your friends’ alcohol use and their behavior can help determine if they are in trouble.

Here are the three things you will want to do to ensure your friends’ safety:

- 1) **Position them on their side.** Bend their legs at the knee for stability to prevent them from rolling on their stomach or back and rest their head on their arm between the bed or floor.
- 2) **Stay with them.** Too often, someone who has had a dangerous amount of alcohol has been left to “sleep it off” alone with tragic results. Check for normal breathing and whether they are responsive.
- 3) **Call 911.** If your friend is showing any of the signs of alcohol poisoning, get help immediately – it might save a life.

Remember that only time can help eliminate alcohol from the body – hot or cold showers, coffee, stimulants or other quick fixes simply do not work. Also, if someone is intoxicated to the point of passing out, avoid giving him or her any food or drink since choking is a serious concern.

We all want to be able to help out our friends or others in need. In these situations, it is not just what we know, but the ability to act that makes a difference. How much you choose to drink – if you drink at all – can determine whether you’ll be able to step up when that time comes.



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