

the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q I don't drink every day and I don't need it to start the day, but when I party I like to party hard and I don't turn down an opportunity to drink. A friend told me I might be an alcoholic... am I?

A. Maybe, maybe not. We don't have enough information to make that determination. Fortunately you don't have to be a medical professional to start answering your question.

One simple option is to use the **CAGE** self-assessment:

- Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
- Have you felt **A**nnoyed by others criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (**E**ye opener)?

One "yes" answer signals a possible problem, and more than one means check-up time.

This may be a case of alcohol abuse vs. alcohol dependence. So how can you tell the difference? The following comparisons can help you determine this.

Substance Abuse Indicators:

- A pattern of use with negative consequences and multiple incidents
- Using despite knowledge that use causes or contributes to problems
- Use in situations that are physically dangerous
- Moderation possible

Substance Dependence Indicators:

- Tolerance
- Periodic loss of control in terms of how much you use and/or behavior
- Persistent desire or unsuccessful effort to cut down
- Substance use despite knowledge that use causes or contributes to problems
- Substance use criticized by family members or friends
- Moderation doesn't work

People who abuse alcohol can limit the amount they drink when the consequences become severe enough. People who are truly dependent on alcohol cannot do this.

If you are still wondering, then check it out. Don't delay. Get an alcohol assessment by calling Counseling & Psychological Services at 621-3334.



wildfact

75% of UA students usually go out one night a week or less.
(2009 Health & Wellness Survey, N=1,720)

Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu and have a chance to win a \$100 Best Buy gift card during the Spring 2010 semester.



The Red Cup Q&A is written by Lynn Reyes, LCSW, LSAC, David Salafsky, MPH, Lee Ann Hamilton, MA, CHES, and Spencer Gorin, RN, in the Health Promotion and Preventive Services (HPPS) department of the UA Campus Health Service.