

the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Is sex consensual if you are blacked out?

A. A **blackout** occurs when someone drinks enough that their BAC (blood alcohol concentration) is high enough to impair brain receptors, blocking the formation of memories. Blackouts are sometimes called alcohol amnesia. It's not that you forgot what happened; you never formed the memory in the first place. During a blackout, you are awake and may appear to be functioning to your friends. However, the next day you can't remember what you did the night before. It's as if your brain was sprayed with non-stick cooking spray and the memories couldn't "stick." This is why you might have danced, had fun, played games, had sex, or jumped in the Old Main fountain on Saturday, and remembered none of it on Sunday.

Arizona Revised Statutes state that sexual assault has occurred if a victim was "incapable of consent by reason of mental disorder, mental defect, drugs, alcohol, sleep, or any other similar impairment of cognition." **Sex with a person who is incapacitated is rape.** Signs that someone may experience a blackout include drinking too much, drinking more than usual, stumbling, confusion, and lack of awareness of their surroundings. Clearly, if a person has been drinking heavily and their mental state is impaired, or you have doubts about their cognitive ability, it's not "OK" to have sex with them.

A **passed out** person is dangerously intoxicated and can be at risk for slipping into a coma. They cannot speak or give consent. If someone has passed out, get medical attention immediately. Having sex with someone who is passed out (unconscious) from drinking excessive amounts of alcohol is rape. Most cases of acquaintance rape involve alcohol use by both the victim and perpetrator.

A helpful way to make sex consensual is to avoid (or limit) your use of alcohol in potentially intimate situations. Make sure that you and your partner have clear heads. Then you will never have to wonder if sex was consensual. If you're going to "get it on," make it a lasting memory.



wildfact

A typical six-pack of beer has between 800-900 calories.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

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