

# the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q What is a lethal amount of alcohol?

**A.** The term “lethal dose” is used to describe the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) which would cause death from alcohol poisoning in half of the population. That lethal dose is .45% BAC. This means that 50% of people would die from alcohol poisoning at that level. The other 50% would die if they were either below or above that amount. There have been cases of death reported at lower than .40 % BAC as well as survivors with a BAC over .5%. This makes the over-consumption of alcohol a very risky gamble.

Frequent causes of such high BAC among college students are binge drinking, consuming shots, and playing drinking games over a short amount of time. What makes these drinking styles especially dangerous is that a person can often drink a fatal amount before losing consciousness. Their BAC keeps on rising as alcohol continues to be absorbed in their blood stream. A person “sleeping it off” may actually still be in danger even after they stopped drinking.

So, how easy is it to get to a lethal dose? A 120 lb. woman could achieve a .45% BAC if she drank 12 standard drinks over two hours. 140 lb. man would reach the same BAC after consuming 17 standard drinks.

The good news is that death from alcohol poisoning is extremely easy to prevent by never over-consuming alcohol in the first place. No one plans to die by drinking alcohol any more than they drink to intentionally get a hangover, throw up, drunk-text, have regrets, and harm themselves or another.

Staying in your Sweet Spot (.05%BAC or under) will result in safer and more satisfying alcohol experiences. No more than 1 drink/hour for women and 2 drinks or less/hour for men.

If you choose to drink alcohol, make sure you do the alcohol and that the alcohol doesn't do you – stay in control and have a plan.

wildfact

**Singer Amy Winehouse died from alcohol poisoning in 2011.**



**CAMPUS HEALTH**



Got a question about alcohol? Email it to [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu)

[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

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