

the

# RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q What are the delirium tremens?

**A.** The delirium tremens (Latin for “shaking frenzy”), also known as the DTs, is a severe form of alcohol withdrawal. Individuals who experience the DTs usually have either stopped drinking, following a period of very heavy alcohol use, or suffer from alcohol dependence. Symptoms often show up within 72 hours of the individual’s last drink and may include body tremors, irregular heart rate, seizures, and a host of other mental health-related issues, from agitation and confusion, to anxiety and depression.

Treatment for the DTs is comprehensive in nature and may be necessary to save a life. In the short term, hospitalization and medication are often needed to relieve symptoms and prevent complications. In the long term, counseling and support groups may be recommended to help achieve total abstinence from alcohol.

According to one study, 6% of college students met the criteria for alcohol dependence, though 31% were described as using alcohol to the point of abuse. While those numbers are still too high, it’s easy to lose sight of the fact that the majority of students either don’t drink or drink moderately most of the time. Alcohol use is often described as a spectrum – beneficial or casual on one side, moving to problematic and chronic use on the other. While any amount of alcohol may be risky for some individuals, the renaissance physician Paracelsus said it best: the dose makes the poison. Limiting your alcohol use to no more than 14 drinks per week for men or 7 drinks per week for women is the single best way to take advantage of the social benefits of alcohol while minimizing alcohol’s negative effects.

If you would like to change your alcohol use or have a friend who you are concerned about, there are resources at the UA that can help. These include Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS) at the Campus Health Service (621-3334) which offers individual counseling with trained substance abuse professionals, as well as the Friend-2-Friend website, which offers students practical advice on how to reach out to a friend in need.

Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

wildfact

A “fifth” (750 ml) is a common volume for both wine and distilled spirits. It gets the name since it is very close to 1/5 of a gallon.



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



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