

the **RED CUP** Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Why do ugly people look better when I drink?

A. You've heard that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." And if the "beerholder" drinks too much alcohol, the frontal cortex of the brain, eyes (and other senses) become impaired. It's as if a person is wearing "beer goggles," meaning that alcohol clouds the vision of the drinker, not to mention judgment and reasoning skills.

When sober, the body works best, with neurons firing well, allowing the brain to accurately process information and perceptions of people, places, and events. The ability to process and evaluate the surrounding world is at its peak. However, normal functions and reactions often fail when under the influence of spirits. Alcohol acts as a drug to depress and diminish the responses of the Central Nervous System. A rising blood alcohol concentration (BAC) can cause blurred or double vision and an inability to see well in the dark. The more alcohol imbibed, the greater the impairment in the drinker.

Alcohol affects the brain in an interesting and predictable sequence. The cerebral cortex (located mostly in the front and top of the brain) is the first area to be disturbed. As BAC rises, drinkers experience diminished judgment, reason, decision-making, and self-control, leading to the lowering of inhibitions in social settings. Next to be impacted is the cerebellum (located in the back lower part of the brain) which controls muscle coordination and equilibrium. The last area to be affected is the medulla, which regulates heart rate and breathing.

Remarkably, there may be another scientific explanation to your question. Recent studies indicate that facial symmetry is a desirable quality of physical attractiveness in humans. Drinking alcohol has been proven to reduce visual perception and judgment. According to researchers* from Brazil and the United Kingdom, intoxicated subjects were less able to detect asymmetry than sober subjects. Alcohol makes people less able to see imperfections. In real life terms, this may partially explain why the drunker you get... the better others look.

* Souto, Bezerra, Halsey, 2008



wildfact

Room spins are caused by convulsions in the tiny muscles (iris) of the eyes.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

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