Lesson 2: Alcohol and Your Body

This lesson can be used individually or in sequence with Lessons 1 and 3.

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about the harmful effects of alcohol on different parts of the body.

MATERIALS

Worksheet 2 printable (PDF)
Worksheet Answer Key (PDF)

Time Required: 20 minutes, with additional time for classroom discussion

SET UP AND PREPARE

Skills Covered: Reading Comprehension/Critical Thinking

Key Concepts: When a person drinks alcohol, it is absorbed into the bloodstream and affects nearly every organ system in the body. Alcohol can have short-term effects on the body, such as a stomachache. Long-term abuse can damage vital organs such as the heart, liver, kidneys, and stomach. This damage can lead to potentially deadly diseases such as kidney failure or cirrhosis of the liver. The effects of alcohol on an individual’s body depend on many factors, including age, weight, gender, and genetics.

DIRECTIONS

Discussion: What parts of the body other than the brain do you think are affected by alcohol? Do you think alcohol can harm organs in your body? Do you think underage drinking can be deadly? Have students complete the Student Worksheet individually or in small groups.

Critical Thinking: What long-term effects does drinking alcohol have on the body? How does drinking alcohol make you more susceptible to potentially deadly conditions? How do you think abusing alcohol would affect your appearance over time?
Worksheets Answer Key:


**Worksheet 1: Alcohol and Your Brain** 1. Cerebral Cortex; 2. Hippocampus; 3. It can shut down the medulla, which controls involuntary processes, such as maintaining body temperature and breathing.

**Worksheet 2: Alcohol and Your Body** 1. a; 2. a; 3. c; 4. b

**Worksheet 3: Making Smart Choices**

1. Answers may vary but may include that the effect on your brain that makes you less inhibited also impairs your ability to think clearly. You may make decisions without thinking about the consequences. You may do something that you would later regret.

2. Answers may vary but may include that drinking alcohol can slow your reflexes and blur your vision, making driving very dangerous. Sally should not get into the car if her sister or any other friends who were drinking are driving.

**Critical Thinking:** Answers may vary but should include that young people may be more affected by alcohol than older people because their brains are still developing and their bodies are smaller.
When a person drinks alcohol, it is absorbed into the bloodstream within minutes and affects nearly every organ system in the body. How alcohol affects people depends on a number of factors, such as:

- The same amount of alcohol more strongly affects a person who weighs less than a heavier person.
- Because their bodies are still developing, young people are more at risk for some types of alcohol damage.
- The same amount of alcohol typically affects women more than it does men.

On the right, read through facts about the effects of alcohol on the body. Then test what you know by choosing the correct answers below.

1. Which organ breaks down alcohol?
   a. Liver  c. Heart  
   b. Kidneys  d. Lungs

2. Over time, alcohol can make it difficult for the body to soak up bone-building ____.
   a. calcium  c. oxygen  
   b. enamel  d. carbon

3. Alcohol causes your ____.
   a. liver to produce more urine.  
   b. heart to produce more blood. 
   c. stomach to produce more acid. 
   d. stomach to produce more urine.

4. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
   a. Long-term alcohol abuse may lead to cancer. 
   b. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time decreases blood pressure. 
   c. Alcohol affects nearly every organ system in the body. 
   d. Abusing alcohol over a long period of time can make acne worse.

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Fast Fact

The word “intoxicated” refers to the fact that alcohol is toxic, or hazardous, to the body.

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