

Chapter 21

Alcohol

1. The Health Risks of Alcohol Use
2. Choosing to Live Alcohol-Free
3. The Impact of Alcohol Abuse

#Ondaylwokeup #Doppitup

Lesson 1 — The Health Risks of Alcohol Use

Alcohol is a powerful **depressant** — it slows the central nervous system. Despite sometimes feeling stimulating at low doses, it makes you feel less inhibited while actually becoming less capable. Impairment begins with the **first drink**.

Binge drinking is defined as consuming enough alcohol to raise BAC to 0.08% or above — typically **4+ drinks for females** and **5+ drinks for males** within about 2 hours (updated thresholds from original textbook's 'five or more' for both).

■■ **ALCOHOL POISONING:** *When someone passes out drunk, alcohol in the stomach continues entering the bloodstream. BAC keeps rising even while unconscious. Leaving someone to 'sleep it off' can be leaving them to die. Signs: lips turning blue, fewer than 8 breaths/minute, unresponsive. CALL 911.*

Lesson 2 — Choosing to Live Alcohol-Free

Great news: teen drinking is at historically low levels. In 2024, only **13%** of 8th–12th graders combined reported past-30-day alcohol use (down from the textbook's 45% figure). **82%** of 8th graders, **68%** of 10th graders, and **51%** of 12th graders have **never** consumed alcohol — all record highs.

Teens who begin drinking before age 15 are **4–5 times more likely** to develop alcohol use disorder than those who wait. Alcohol use during adolescence can permanently alter brain development.

Lesson 3 — The Impact of Alcohol Abuse

Approximately **29.5 million Americans ages 12+** had Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in 2023 (updated from textbook's '17 million'). Alcohol is involved in approximately **13,000 traffic fatalities** annually (updated from 17,000).

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) — the umbrella term for permanent conditions caused by prenatal alcohol exposure — is the leading preventable cause of intellectual disability in the U.S. There is **NO** safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy.

■ Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Free peer support meetings worldwide; 12-step program
■ Al-Anon / Alateen	Support for family members and friends of people with AUD
■ SAMHSA Helpline	1-800-662-4357 — free, confidential, 24/7
■ MADD	Education and advocacy to prevent drunk driving

Chapter Vocabulary

Lesson 1

Ethanol	The type of alcohol found in beverages; a powerful, addictive depressant drug
Depressant	A drug that slows the central nervous system
Intoxication	The state in which alcohol has significantly impaired a person's physical and mental control
Binge drinking	Consuming enough alcohol to reach a BAC of 0.08% or above within about 2 hours
Alcohol poisoning	A severe, potentially fatal physical reaction to alcohol overdose requiring immediate 911 response

Lesson 2

Psychological dependence	A condition in which a person believes they need alcohol to feel good or function normally
Physiological dependence	A condition in which the body has a chemical need for alcohol; stopping causes physical withdrawal

Lesson 3

Blood alcohol concentration (BAC)	The percentage of alcohol in a person's blood; the standard measure of legal intoxication for driving
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD)	A range of permanent conditions caused by alcohol exposure during pregnancy
Recovery	The lifelong process of learning to live without alcohol following alcohol use disorder