



## ROYAL SOLOMON ISLANDS POLICE FORCE

### FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL



#### What is alcohol?

The intoxicating ingredient in alcoholic drinks is referred to as ethyl, ethanol or pure alcohol. This occurs in different amounts in each type of drink. Pure alcohol has no colour or taste.

Alcoholic drinks vary in colour and taste because of the ingredients used to flavour them. Alcohol is produced by fermentation – the action of yeast on liquids containing sugars and starches.

Alcohol is a powerful drug. It is toxic and can poison the body and cause long term health problems if taken in large quantities or in combination with other drugs.

Alcohol is classed as a depressant, and actually slows the central nervous system. So thinking becomes less clear.

#### Factors which determine the effect of alcohol on the body

Alcohol affects all people differently. This is due to the interaction of factors associated with the alcohol itself, e.g.

- The amount drunk, the strength of beer and how quickly it is drunk,
- The person, their health, personality, mood they are in, body size and fat versus muscle ratio, sex and age,
- The environment if the person is alone or with the family or friends when alcohol is consumed.

#### Responses to Problem Drinking

A person who drinks may experience problems in any one or combination of these areas;

- Problems related to intoxication are more likely to result from the acute effects of alcohol. They are the most visible and disturbing effects of alcohol use. These problems are often social in nature. E.g., embarrassment from being drunk, violent and aggressive behaviour, drink driving, family violence, physical and psychological injuries, marital breakdowns, homicide, child abuse and assaults.
- Regular, excessive use may affect the person's health and cause long-term physical damage to organs such as the liver, brain and other parts of the body.
- Financial difficulties will arise as more and more alcohol is purchased to fulfil this addiction.
- Problems of dependence occur as the person begins to devote more time to alcohol use at the cost of other activities.



## Alcohol and other drugs

The combination of alcohol and other drugs (cannabis and others) can have unpredictable and potentially dangerous effects.



## What happens when you use Alcohol?

The effects of alcohol can generally be experienced within 30-60 minutes. There is an increase or decrease in heart rate, lowering of body temperature, a sensation of warmth and relaxation and increased appetite.

In high dose, alcohol may result in a hangover – nausea, fatigue, dry throat, headache, dizziness and other aches. There may also be feelings of anxiety and depression.

## What are the Long Term Effects?

Excessive drinking can cause problems like brain damage, hypertension, stomach inflation, ulcers, and liver damage.

They may be confused, blackouts, or short term memory loss which can become permanent. Cancer of lung, throat, stomach and mouth can also occur.

Tolerance and physical dependence to alcohol can develop with frequent use. Tolerance means a person needs more alcohol to get the same effect as they did previously on smaller amount.

Physical dependence means a person is likely to experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop using alcohol or cut down the amount they drink. Signs of this are loss of appetite, feeling sick, anxiety, sleeplessness, irritability, confusion, sweating, tremors, cramping, vomiting and hallucinations.



## When Drinking

The large majority of the problems associated with alcohol are caused when people are intoxicated or drunk;

- If you must drink alcohol, do not drink to get drunk
- Always eat food when you are drinking
- Drink reduced alcohol drinks

- Drink water or soft drink between your alcohol drinks
- For men, do not drink more than four alcoholic drinks per day
- For women, do not drink more than two alcoholic drinks per day Do not drink alcohol if you have taken any other drugs
- Do not drink alcohol and then drive a vehicle
- Make other transport arrangements, get a taxi home if you intend drinking



**BE RESPONSIBLE WHEN  
YOU DRINK**

## For more information contact:

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