



## **THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL**

### What are its short-term effects?

When a person drinks alcohol, the alcohol is absorbed by the stomach, enters the bloodstream, and goes to all the tissues. The effects of alcohol are dependent on a variety of factors, including the person's size, weight, age and sex, as well as the amount of food and alcohol consumed. The disinhibiting effect of alcohol is one of the main reasons it is used in so many social situations. Other effects of moderate alcohol intake include dizziness and talkativeness. The immediate effects of a larger amount of alcohol include slurred speech, disturbed sleep, nausea and vomiting. Alcohol even at low doses significantly impairs the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely. Low to moderate doses of alcohol can also increase the incidents of a variety of aggressive acts, including domestic violence and child abuse.

### What are its long-term effects?

Prolonged, heavy use of alcohol can lead to addiction. Sudden cessation of long term extensive alcohol intake is likely to produce withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations and convulsions. Long-term effects of consuming large quantities of alcohol, especially when combined with poor nutrition, can lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and liver. In addition, mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to irreversible physical abnormalities. In addition, research indicates that children of alcoholic parents are at greater risk than other children of becoming alcoholics. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a disorder seen in a small number of the children born of mothers who drink heavily during pregnancy. A child with fetal alcohol syndrome usually has low intelligence and learning problems.

Physical changes may occur when a person stops or decreases very heavy use of alcohol or other addictive drugs. Withdrawal symptoms usually include shaking, sweating, rapid breathing and agitation. Hallucinations or convulsions may also occur. Withdrawal symptoms usually include shaking, sweating, rapid breathing and agitation. Hallucinations or convulsions may also occur.