

How to help a friend who has had too much to drink

Information provided by GatorWell Health Promotion Services

Phone: (352) 273-4450 | Website: <http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>

Alcohol poisoning can be fatal. If someone has had too much to drink or hurt him or herself while drinking, call 911 immediately and stay with the person until help arrives.

In cases of a potential **head injury**, even if the person regains consciousness, he or she must be evaluated immediately.

Signs of alcohol poisoning:

If the person is experiencing ANY of these signs, call 911:

- Inability to rouse the person with loud shouting
- Vomiting while passed out, not waking up after vomiting, or incoherent while vomiting
- Inability of a person who was passed out to stay awake for more than 2-3 minutes
- Breathing is slow (less than 8 breaths per minute) or irregular, with 10 seconds or more between breaths
- Weak pulse, very rapid pulse, or very slow pulse
- Cold, clammy, or bluish skin

What to do:

- **Call 911.**
- **Stay with the person** until help arrives.
- Be prepared to **give the emergency medical personnel as much information as possible**, including any drugs or medications taken.

What NOT to do:

- **Do not hesitate to call 911.** The person's life is in danger. Better to be safe than sorry.
- **Do not leave the person alone.** The person may seem to be okay, but the alcohol ingested may take some time to be absorbed before peak levels are reached in the brain.
- **Do not try to give the person anything to eat or drink.**
- **Do not put the person in a cold shower.** The person could fall or the shock could make him/her pass out.
- **Don't just let him or her "sleep it off."**