

# Alcoholology 101

For many people, alcohol is a refreshing beverage and a mood enhancer, while for others it's a stress reliever or social lubricant. ☺ Whether we are BBQ'ing, golfing, gaming, or just hanging out with friends, we have created a culture in which it's acceptable to combine alcohol with (almost) any activity we want. Partially as a result of this, the average age of first exposure to alcohol is now 14 years old, and this continues to get younger and younger each generation. In short, we learn how to drink in our teenage years. Think back to your first alcoholic beverage: how old were you? The fact we learn how to drink at such a young age shapes how we end up utilizing alcohol throughout our lives. because we never take a class to teach us how to drink alcohol responsibly (or how not to make a fool of ourselves). Compound that with the rite of passage to get "wasted" our first time drinking (at age 21.....right?), and we are exposed to social drinking, parties, peer pressure, and drinking behavior modeled by older sibling and even parents, from a very young age. This early exposure, while our teenage brains are still developing, leads up to create interesting beliefs, myths, and "facts" regarding alcohol use.



Common myths we drink by:

- ***“Beer before liquor never sicker, liquor before beer in the clear”***  
FALSE. Always consider how beverage combinations mix in your stomach while drinking, just as you might consider other combinations (milk and Mountain Dew for b-fast anyone?).
- ***“You can’t get as drunk on beer as you can on liquor”***  
FALSE. No matter what form of alcohol you consume, your body does not discriminate; it’s all processed the same. For liquor (80 proof or lower), a standard drink is 1.5 oz. whereas beer is 12 oz....so yes, you can consume more standard drinks of liquor, but 10 shots and 10 x 12 oz. (non-IPA) beers are equal.
- ***“Tequila makes me angry”***  
FALSE....alcohol is a mood ENHANCER. Therefore, if you have some unprocessed feelings irritation or agitation, it might creep to the surface while drinking. Extra true when drama shows up to the party.

Common myths we sober up by:

- ***“Caffeine will sober me up”***  
False. Caffeine masks intoxication (mixing a stimulant and a depressant), so it may make you *feel* alert and focused, but it doesn't speed up the metabolic (liver/kidneys) process. Sobering up just takes time.
- ***“Suck on a penny to sober up faster”***  
Please don't put money in your mouth....forever unclean! (also, this doesn't fool the breathalyzer)
- ***“Eat bread, greasy foods, or condiment packets”***  
False. Alcohol is absorbed through the stomach lining, regardless of what food with which you fill your tummy. While fats and carbs are good to help your body put back the nutrients you lost while drinking (alcohol is a diuretic), if you're looking to sober up, what you need is water and time.

The most important message here, is to drink responsibly. By keeping tabs on how much you drink, adding a glass of water in between drinks (dehydration is the hangover culprit), and looking out for each other, you'll be able to live by new beliefs that will keep you safe—and help you have a good time!

For questions, contact the ART at [363ISRW.363.363ISRW@us.af.mil](mailto:363ISRW.363.363ISRW@us.af.mil) or 757-764-9316