

# Educator guide: Alcohol lesson

**Recommended for grades:**

4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades

**Time:**

6 minutes

**National Health Education Standards:**

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 5: Use a decision-making process to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

**Learning objectives:**

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Name two drinks that are examples of alcohol.
2. List two factors that can explain why alcohol affects people differently.
3. Describe two short-term and two long-term effects of alcohol use.
4. Use the five steps of decision-making to make a decision on their own.

**Lesson description:**

In the Alcohol lesson, students will learn what alcohol is and how it affects the body. They will also learn about the decision-making process.

### Pre and post-test questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. Which of these things is a factor in how alcohol affects a person?
  - a. Their age
  - b. The amount of food they've eaten
  - c. Their weight
  - d. All of the above**
2. Which is the final step in the decision-making process?
  - a. Make your decision
  - b. List the positives and negatives of each option
  - c. Evaluate the results**
3. What is it called when a person drinks a lot of alcohol in a short period of time and their body can't handle it?
  - a. Addiction
  - b. Alcohol poisoning**
  - c. A high

## Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete the Alcohol lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Addiction – when a person’s body is so dependent on a drug that it is very difficult to stop using that drug
- Alcohol – a liquid drug that is a depressant, meaning it slows down the body. Alcoholic drinks can come in the form of beer, wine or hard liquor.
- Alcohol poisoning – occurs when a person drinks a lot of alcohol in a short period of time, and the liver cannot keep up with breaking down alcohol in the body. A person with alcohol poisoning can pass out, vomit and even die.
- Beer – a type of alcoholic drink
- Cerebellum – the part of the brain that is responsible for balance, movement and coordination
- Depressant – a drug that slows down the body, especially slowing down the nervous system and the sending of messages throughout the body. Alcohol is an example of a depressant.
- Drug – a chemical that changes the way a person’s body works
- Drunk– when a person’s physical and mental abilities are impaired from drinking alcohol
- Esophagus – the tube that food travels through to get from the throat to the stomach. It is part of the digestive system.
- Frontal lobe – the part of the brain that controls reasoning, planning, emotions and problem-solving. It also helps regulate impulsive behavior.
- Hard liquor – a type of alcoholic drink. Examples are vodka, rum, gin and whiskey. Typically, hard liquor has a high alcohol content.
- Hippocampus – the part of the brain that stores memory
- Illegal – something that is against the law
- Long-term effects – health problems or diseases that take a longer time to develop (months or years). An example of a long-term effect of smoking cigarettes is tar building up in the lungs causing breathing problems or lung cancer.
- Medulla – the part of the brain that controls many of the body’s automatic functions like breathing, heart rate and blood pressure
- Short-term effects – the immediate health consequences of drug use. An example of short-term effects from alcohol use is feeling dizzy, making poor decisions and loss of coordination and balance.
- Wine – a type of alcoholic drink, made from fermented grapes

# Alcohol worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete this worksheet as you move through the Alcohol lesson.

1. At what age can a person legally drink alcohol?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. List three factors that can determine how alcohol affects a person.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_



3. Write down one way alcohol affects each part of the brain:

a. Frontal lobe

b. Hippocampus

c. Cerebellum

d. Medulla

4. List three short-term effects of using alcohol.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. List three long-term effects of using alcohol.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

6. List the five steps of the decision-making process.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

# Alcohol lesson worksheet answer key

1. At what age can a person legally drink alcohol? 21
2. List three factors that can determine how alcohol affects a person.  
Age, weight, whether they are male or female, amount of food they've eaten
3. Write down one way alcohol affects each part of the brain:
  - a. Frontal lobe - Person may say or do things they normally wouldn't, person may make poor decisions
  - b. Hippocampus - Person may forget things they said or did while drinking alcohol
  - c. Cerebellum - Decrease in motor functions, or the ability to move, slower reaction time, person may have trouble walking in a straight line or stopping their car in time if another car pulls out in front of them
  - d. Medulla - Person may stop breathing, heart can stop, blood pressure can drop which causes death
4. List three short-term effects of using alcohol.  
Saying or doing things you normally wouldn't, not remembering something you said or did, making poor decisions, dizziness, loss of coordination and balance, alcohol poisoning
5. List three long-term effects of using alcohol.  
Damage to the liver, diseases of the stomach, mouth, throat and esophagus, addiction
6. List the five steps of the decision-making process.
  - a. Define the situation.
  - b. Look at your options.
  - c. List the positives and negatives of each option.
  - d. Make your decision.
  - e. Evaluate the results.

# Supplemental activity: Decision making

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Use the five steps of decision making to make a decision on their own.

## Materials needed:

- Decision making worksheet (included below)
- Pen or pencil

## Time required:

30 minutes

## Instructions:

As a class, review the five steps to making a decision listed below:

1. Define the situation.
2. Look at your options.
3. List the positives and negatives of each option.
4. Make your decision.
5. Evaluate the results.

Go through an example with the class. Ask students for decisions they think they may have to make someday, or use one of the following decisions as your example:

- Your friend is pressuring you to smoke a cigarette.
- You're at a sleepover and your friends want to play outside after midnight, even though the parent told you not to leave the house.
- You have a big test tomorrow, but your friend wants to hang out after school.
- You are thinking about trying out for the basketball team.



Give each student a copy of the Decision making worksheet. Give students a week or so to complete this assignment. Instruct them to write down 3 decisions that they have to make and go through the 5 steps for each one. These don't have to be major, life-changing decisions, but could be decisions they have to make each day. This will give them practice working through the 5 steps. Students should also talk to a parent or caregiver about a decision that they have had to make that affects the family. Ideally, this should be a larger decision than what to make for dinner. Perhaps it involves taking a new job, or leaving an old one. It could involve the family's living situation, a health-related decision or a decision about a vacation. Students should work through the 5 steps with the parent or caregiver and discuss the results of the decision.

If time allows, and students are comfortable sharing, hold a class discussion at the end of this activity to talk about some of the decisions students and families have to make.

# Decision making worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Write down three different decisions that you have made, or have to make this week. Go through the five steps to making a decision and write down your answers. Then, sit down and talk with a parent or caregiver about a decision that they have had to make that affects your family. Together, work through the five steps to making a decision and write down your answers.

Decision #1: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define the situation.

2. Look at your options.

3. List the positives and negatives of each option.

4. Make your decision.



5. Evaluate the results.

Decision #2: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define the situation.

2. Look at your options.

3. List the positives and negatives of each option.

4. Make your decision.

5. Evaluate the results.

Decision #3: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define the situation.

2. Look at your options.

3. List the positives and negatives of each option.

4. Make your decision.

5. Evaluate the results.

Family decision: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Define the situation.

2. Look at your options.

3. List the positives and negatives of each option.

4. Make your decision.

5. Evaluate the results.

# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



# Resources and services: Alcohol and other drug-use prevention

- American Lung Association Lung Help Line, 1-800-LUNG-USA (800-586-4872)
- Children's Wisconsin, [www.childrenswi.org](http://www.childrenswi.org)
- KidsHealth, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
- LifeStance Health, [www.lifestance.com](http://www.lifestance.com)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)
- Partnership to End Addiction, [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)
- Rogers Behavioral Health, [www.rogersbh.org](http://www.rogersbh.org)
- The Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin, [www.tobwis.org](http://www.tobwis.org)
- United States Government-Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), [www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov)
- Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW



# Transcript

## Slide 1

It's no wonder that kids often get the wrong message about alcohol. They may see their parents or other relatives drinking, or they may see it on TV. But alcohol isn't all fun and games, especially for kids and teens. Alcohol is a drug. Beer, wine and hard liquor are all examples of alcohol.

## Slide 2

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to drink alcohol. Alcohol affects a younger person's body and brain differently because they're still growing and developing. That doesn't necessarily mean that drinking alcohol as an adult is safe. Even though it's legal to drink once a person is 21, adults can still get into trouble or have health problems because of alcohol.

## Slide 3

How alcohol affects a person depends on many different factors, such as their age, weight, the amount of food they've eaten, and whether they are male or female. For some people one or two drinks may affect them greatly and for others, they may have more drinks and not appear or feel drunk at all. Even if a person does not look or feel drunk, their body is still being affected.

## Slide 4

Alcohol is a depressant, which means it slows down the body. It affects how the brain sends messages. We're going to take a look at how alcohol affects a person's brain and body. Click on each part of the brain to learn more.

### Cerebellum

The cerebellum is responsible for balance, movement and coordination. Drinking alcohol decreases our motor functions, or our ability to move, and it slows reaction time. So, for example, someone who has been drinking a lot has trouble walking in a straight line. And someone who has been drinking may not be able to stop their car in time at a red light.

### Medulla

The medulla controls many of the body's automatic functions like breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. During heavy drinking, these things may slow down or stop working altogether, which could result in death.

### Frontal Lobe

The frontal lobe helps us with reasoning, planning, emotions, and problem-solving. It also helps regulate impulsive behavior. When a person drinks alcohol he or she may say or do things that they normally wouldn't. They may make poor decisions while using alcohol that could affect the health and safety of themselves and others around them. For example, they might get into an argument with someone that could lead to a physical fight.

### Hippocampus

The hippocampus is the part of the brain that stores memory. Drinking alcohol can make a person forget things they may have said or done while drinking.

### Slide 5

Some short-term effects of using alcohol can include saying or doing things you normally wouldn't, not remembering something that you said or did, making poor decisions, dizziness, loss of coordination and balance, and even alcohol poisoning.

### Slide 6

Alcohol poisoning is when a person drinks a lot of alcohol in a short period of time and the body can't handle it. The body can't break down the alcohol fast enough, and in large doses it's a poison. A person could pass out, vomit, or even die from drinking too much. And, remember everyone reacts differently to alcohol, so there's no way to say how much is "a lot".

### Slide 7

There are also some long-term effects of alcohol use. Using alcohol in large quantities over a person's life can cause serious health problems, including damage to the liver and diseases of the stomach, mouth, throat and esophagus. A person can also become addicted to alcohol, which means that their body becomes dependent on it. The person becomes so used to having this drug that he or she can't function well without it.

### Slide 8

Earlier you learned that alcohol can affect a person's ability to make good decisions. Even if we don't realize it, we all make lots of decisions every day. We decide what to wear, what to eat, what to do, and who to hang out with. For more important decisions there are some steps that you can follow to ensure that you make the best decision possible. Keep in mind that if someone is using alcohol, they may not be able to follow these steps. First, you will need to define the situation. So, you'll need to figure out exactly what you need to make a decision about. Then, look at your options. Write them down if it helps. List the positives and negatives of each option. Now, it's time to make your decision. Some people would assume that's the last step, but you should always go back and evaluate the results. For example, if you made the decision to drink alcohol, go back and evaluate whether or not that was a good decision. You may not be able to change what's already been done, but there's always an opportunity to make a different decision next time.

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