Worksheet 2

Alcohol and Your Body

When a person drinks alcohol, it is absorbed into the bloodstream within minutes and affects nearly every organ system in the body. How alcohol affects people depends on a number of factors, such as:

- The same amount of alcohol more strongly affects a person who weighs less than a heavier person.
- Because their bodies are still developing, young people are more at risk for some types of alcohol damage.
- The same amount of alcohol typically affects women more than it does men.

On the right, read through facts about the effects of alcohol on the body. Then test what you know by choosing the correct answers below.

1. Which organ breaks down alcohol?
   a. Liver  
   b. Kidneys  
   c. Heart  
   d. Lungs

2. Over time, alcohol can make it difficult for the body to soak up bone-building _____.
   a. calcium  
   b. enamel  
   c. oxygen  
   d. carbon

3. Alcohol causes your _____.
   a. liver to produce more urine.  
   b. heart to produce more blood.  
   c. stomach to produce more acid.  
   d. stomach to produce more urine.

4. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
   a. Long-term alcohol abuse may lead to cancer.  
   b. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time decreases blood pressure.  
   c. Alcohol affects nearly every organ system in the body.  
   d. Abusing alcohol over a long period of time can make acne worse.

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Heart
- Alcohol causes the heart rate to slow. Heavy drinking over a long period of time can also increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.¹

Stomach
- Alcohol can give you an upset stomach because it makes you produce more stomach acid. Drinking a lot of alcohol over a long period of time can damage the lining of the stomach—causing ulcers or stomach cancer.

Kidneys
- Drinking alcohol causes your body to produce more urine, making your kidneys work overtime. Heavy drinking over a long period of time may lead to kidney failure.

Skin
- Drinking alcohol can give your skin a red appearance similar to blushing because it allows more blood to flow near the skin surface. Drinking a lot of alcohol over a long period of time can cause acne to become worse and make your skin look puffy.

Eyes
- Alcohol can blur your eyesight. Your pupils (the black center of the eye) may get small, making it difficult for your eyes to adjust to light.

Bones
- Drinking a lot of alcohol over a long period of time makes it more difficult for the body to soak up bone-building calcium. Eventually, that makes the bones thinner and easier to break.

Liver
- Your liver is a critical organ; it helps filter poisons out of the blood and makes body-building proteins. Your liver breaks down alcohol so that your body can get rid of it. Heavy drinking over a long period of time can permanently damage your liver, causing a disease called cirrhosis.

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Fast Fact

The word “intoxicated” refers to the fact that alcohol is toxic, or hazardous, to the body.