

## Weekly Wellness Tip

Wellness Matters



### Drug Action Week (June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>)

Drug Action Week is dedicated to raising the public's awareness of alcohol and other drugs thus hopefully reducing the damaging effects they cause across Australian communities. This year's theme is '**Alcohol is a drug – too!**' As the most commonly used drug in Australian society, alcohol can have a significant impact on both individuals and communities. Alcohol misuse can affect all six dimensions of wellness.

**Physical:** Did you know that alcohol-related harm contributes to 3,000 deaths in Australia every year with roughly 10,000 people requiring ongoing medical treatment. Furthermore excessive consumption contributes to one-third of all road deaths and half of all physical, sexual and domestic violence.

Whilst small amounts of alcohol (namely red wine) may be beneficial for cardiovascular health, excessive consumption can have devastating consequences. Short-term physical consequences of alcohol abuse commonly include vomiting, unconsciousness and seizures with the potential to develop into cirrhosis of the liver and permanent brain damage in the long-term. This damage is not only evident in alcoholics but also binge drinkers.

**Social:** Excessive alcohol consumption has the potential to strain social relationships including those with family and close friends. This can result from failing to fulfil responsibilities as well as antisocial behaviour which can lead to arguments about a persons drinking and potentially end the relationship.

**Emotional:** Alcohol is a depressant which slows down the messages between the brain and the body. A small amount can have a calming affect on people thus making them feel more relaxed and confident however large amounts can cause extremes in emotion (sad to happy to angry).

**Occupational:** The annual cost of alcohol related absenteeism has been calculated at 7.5 million working days and \$15.3 billion. In a 2004 survey, 4.4% of Australians admitted to going to work while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Furthermore, alcohol is believed to be responsible for approximately 5% of workplace fatalities.

**Spiritual:** Alcohol abuse, whether short or long-term may cause a person to question their meaning and purpose in life and/or proceed to cloud their judgement on important issues such as home and family life or work, leading to confusion and uncertainty.

**Intellectual:** Being under the influence of alcohol could limit one's ability and/or desire to be creative and seek out stimulating mental activities. Furthermore, with the potential for permanent brain damage, long-term alcohol abuse could impair an individual's ability to engage in meaningful activities.

For more information please visit:

[www.drugactionweek.org.au](http://www.drugactionweek.org.au)

<http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/>

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Antioxidants>

Or contact Wellness Matters:

[www.wellness.qut.edu.au](http://www.wellness.qut.edu.au)

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