

## HOW TO CARE FOR A PERSON WHO HAS HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK

While most college students understand the importance of drinking responsibly, situations can arise where people become very drunk. Providing care for a person who is drunk is important; failure to act could result in a life or death situation. By following the steps outlined here, you will be better prepared to handle an alcohol-related emergency.

- Stay calm so the person will remain calm. Don't communicate anxiety.
- Assess the situation. Is the person in a life-threatening health crisis? If so, get help.
  - Is he/she breathing fewer than 8 times per minute?
  - Do more than 10 pass between breaths?
  - Can you get a reaction by calling his/her name or pinching him/her?
  - Is his/her skin cold, clammy or pale blue in color?
- Get help if the person becomes violent, or if you believe the alcohol has been combined with other drugs.
- Keep your distance. Before approaching or touching, explain what you intend to do in a calm, reassuring manner.
- Keep the person comfortable.
- Prevent him/her from driving or biking.
- Stay with the drunk person. If he/she wishes to sleep, check periodically to see if he/she can be awakened. Don't leave him/her alone to sleep it off.
- If the person is vomiting, make sure the individual is lying on his/her side with one arm extended above the head, not his/her back.
- Providing food, aspirin or caffeine may increase the risk of vomiting. Providing liquid stimulants will only result in a wide-awake, agitated drunk person.
- Don't put the person in a cold shower. The shock may cause the person to pass out, resulting in injury.
- Don't force the person to exercise to burn off the alcohol, this could also cause injuries.
- Know that time is the only thing that will sober the person up.
- Utilize the support of others, enlist involvement of friends
- Get a sober friend if you are intoxicated.



Providing care for someone who has had too much to drink can mean the difference between a tragedy and an ill-fated evening. If you feel concerned, chances are you should be concerned, and you should act to protect that person.

Adapted from Tri-State University's "Taking Care of an Intoxicated Person," Trinity University's "Caring for an Intoxicated Friend," and "Reducing High-Risk Drinking" from Ohio University.

