

Alcohol and/or Substance Abuse

Your health and safety are very important to us. Because of the large number of people with the flu, hospitals and emergency rooms are very busy. As a result, we are closely evaluating who we can take in the ambulance to the hospital.

We have evaluated that you do not need to go in the ambulance to the hospital at this time. There is a responsible adult with you to help make sure you are safe. Paramedics are giving you this sheet to help you care for yourself at home.

You can get medical care at a clinic, urgent care center or an emergency room. If you decide to do so, you will need to get to these places on your own. Remember hospitals are seeing a lot of patients with the flu. If you go to a hospital you risk getting infected with the flu.

How does alcohol affect my body?

Alcohol can affect your body and life in a negative way. Alcohol affects every organ in your body and your nervous system. Alcohol can be addicting.

Too much alcohol will affect:

- **How you act.**

Your behavior can change and you may do things you usually would not do. You can become very confused and disoriented.

- **Your memory.**

Alcohol affects your brain. If you drink too much alcohol, you may not remember periods of time.

- **How your muscles work.**

Alcohol can cause you to lose your balance; also you can have poor muscle control. This can lead to falls and accidents.

- **Nausea & vomiting.**

Your body will develop nausea & vomiting as a way to get rid of the alcohol. If you are too drunk and vomit, you are at risk of vomiting fluids into your lungs.

When someone drinks too much alcohol, they are at risk of coma. Coma is life-threatening and puts you at risk of death.

How do other substances, such as illegal drugs, affect my body?

Other substances and illegal drugs can affect you in many ways that are dangerous. It depends what substances you took. There are some signs of danger to look out for listed below.

Call 911 if the person who is drunk or has used substances, shows any of these signs:

- Cannot walk on their own.
- Becomes very confused, very disoriented.
- Vomiting that does not stop, or vomiting blood.
- Has bloody stools.
- Cannot be awakened or is unconscious.
- Has trouble breathing or has shortness of breath.
- Becomes pale or bluish in color.
- Is sweating for no known reason.
- Becomes aggressive, abusive, agitated or suicidal.
- Has a seizure or a convulsion.

This information is to help you care for the person who has drunk too much alcohol or abused drugs.

The evaluation and/or treatment by the paramedics today are not to replace the recommendation of a doctor.

You can get medical care by a doctor on your own.

You should call 911 for any medical symptom, concerns that happen after we leave today.



These Home Care Instructions are for use during specified times of severe pandemic influenza, courtesy of the Metro Region EMS System, Metro Emergency Services Board, 2099 W. University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55014-3431