

Depressants – Alcohol

Depressants

- Depressants slow down (or “depress”) the normal activity in the brain
- Useful for patients who are anxious or can’t sleep
- Safe when used in recommended doses
- Increase release of inhibitory neurotransmitters (GABA)
- General effects:
 - sedation, drowsiness, decreased anxiety, memory loss, disinhibition, and decreased heart rate and blood pressure
- Addictive
- Examples of depressants include:
 - barbituates, benzodiazepines, date-rape drugs, opiates, and alcohol.



What is Alcohol?

- Alcohol is a legal drug whose active ingredient is the chemical ethanol
- How soon the effects are felt depend on:
 - amount consumed, age, sex, weight, and genetics
- Short-term effects include:
 - unconsciousness, vomiting, breathing difficulties, impaired judgment, anemia, coma, and blackouts
- Long-term effects include:
 - alcoholism, high blood pressure, alcohol poisoning, ulcers, liver disease, strokes and oral cancers
- Alcohol withdrawal is very dangerous and can cause:
 - fevers, seizures, heart disease, and even death



Where to Find More Information

Depressants

- <http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/prescription/depressants.html>
- <http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/depressants>

Alcohol

- Alcohol Fact Sheets and Statistics:
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets>
- Treatment & Self-Help:
<http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=28>
- http://www.helpguide.org/mental/alcohol_abuse_alcoholism_help_treatment_prevention.htm

