## 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:
  - barbiturates, 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.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/prescription/depressants.html)

### Alcohol
- Alcohol Fact Sheets and Statistics:
- Treatment & Self-Help: