

# Danger in Disguise

*by Winston J. Craig*

People often turn to alcohol when they want to have a good time or eliminate worries. But it can do neither. It promises a good life, but delivers far less. Alcohol leaves a trail of destruction wherever it goes.

Thousands lose their lives every year on the highways from alcohol-related accidents. Alcohol is also implicated in many homicides, assaults, suicides, robberies, incidents of domestic violence, child molestations, and rape. Problem drinking is also a significant factor in divorce and reduced work productivity.

Red wine is promoted as being good for cardiovascular health since it raises the good HDL cholesterol levels and reduces the risk of blood clots. However, regular exercise and red grape juice, respectively, can accomplish the same two things. When factors other than heart disease are considered, the dangers of drinking alcohol far outweigh any potential benefits.

The regular use of alcohol is also associated with cirrhosis of the liver, increased risk of stroke, osteoporosis, birth defects, and a depressed immune system. Use of alcohol also increases the risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, liver, pancreas, large bowel, rectum, and stomach. Risk of breast cancer increases about 20 percent in women consuming one alcoholic drink per week.

Alcohol is a potent central nervous system depressant and can effect the pharmacological action of both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Over 100 medications are known to react adversely when taken concurrently with alcohol.

Alcohol impairs mental functions. Even at the lowest measurable level, alcohol impairs perception, learning, judgment, and reaction time. Sweden's National Road and Traffic Research Institute found that subjects whose blood alcohol level had returned to zero just one day after drinking still drove significantly worse than they did prior to drinking.

Boston researchers determined that alcohol-related brain damage can begin with social drinking. With CT scans they found shrinkage of the brain even in light-to-moderate drinkers. Brain shrinkage begins in the frontal lobes where the decision-making and moral-value centers of the brain are located.

According to the director of the World Health Organization Program on Substance Abuse, there is no minimum threshold below which alcohol can be consumed without any risk.

Solomon wrote long ago that those who linger over wine sparkling in the cup experience strife and sorrow, since in the end it bites like a snake (Prov. 23:29-32).

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Even social drinking can cause brain shrinkage.

Alcohol impairs judgment and decision-making.

Alcohol promises the good life, but leaves a trail of destruction.