

Protecting Yourself & Others

Knowing the Risks of Alcohol Misuse

Grades 9-12

Length 45-90 minutes

Summary

When students recognize the risks of misusing alcohol, they are better able to make responsible and informed decisions. In this lesson, students explore the short- and long-term risks of alcohol misuse and consider how those risks can affect personal health, relationships, and others well-being. Students apply what they learn to realistic scenarios involving high-risk drinking and use decision-making strategies to identify ways to protect themselves and others.

Learning Objectives

- Summarize common terms and information associated with drinking alcohol and short- and long-term risks of alcohol misuse.
- Apply decision-making skills to situations involving alcohol misuse including when a person is a bystander.

Vocabulary

- Alcohol misuse
- Alcohol overdose
- Alcohol use disorder
- Anxiety
- Binge/hazardous drinking
- Blackout
- Bystander
- Chronic disease
- Dependence
- Fatigue
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD)
- Genetics
- Hangover
- Heavy drinking
- Impair
- Immune system
- Inflammation
- Inhibitions
- Moderate drinking
- Nausea
- Standard drink
- Withdrawal

Guiding Question

What can you do to protect yourself and others from the dangers of alcohol misuse?

Standards

National Health Education Standards:

- 1.12.3 Evaluate behaviors that reduce or prevent illnesses and injuries.
- 5.12.5 Analyze the potential impact of a decision on the health and well-being at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental levels.

Common Core Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.9: Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.

Materials

- [Kahoot: The Risks of Alcohol Misuse](#)
- [Google Doc: Vocabulary List](#)
- [Google Doc: The Risks of Alcohol Misuse Pre-assessment](#)
- [Google Doc: The Risks of Alcohol Misuse Note-taking Guide](#)
- [Google Doc: "What to do if" Decision-making Scenarios Handout](#)
- [Google Slide Presentation: The Risks of Alcohol Misuse](#)
- [Internet Access](#)

Preparation

Before class, ensure students can access handouts and activities by printing copies, uploading materials to online learning management systems, allowing access to Google Docs and Slides, or by setting up a Kahoot! profile.

Identify any needed lesson modifications based on time limitations, student accommodations, or other factors.

Review content and teacher notes in The Risks of Alcohol Misuse Google Slides presentation and "What to do if" scenarios to prepare for any potential questions students might have.

PROCEDURES

1. Warm-up

5-10 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Begin class by having students complete the following written prompt independently:
Make a list of five things that can happen as a result of drinking too much alcohol. For each, identify if it is a short- or long-term consequence.
- B. Ask students to share examples from their list if they feel comfortable doing so. Make a list of examples for the class to view. As a class, identify these as short- or long-term consequences and discuss why.

2. Introductory discussion: What is alcohol misuse?

5-15 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Use the **Risks of Alcohol Misuse Google Slides** presentation to introduce the concepts of the legal drinking age and alcohol misuse.
- B. Have the class respond to the following questions as a full class discussion, think-pair-share activity, or written assignment.
 - i. *What are some behaviors that might qualify as alcohol misuse?*
 - ii. *For some people, why might any amount of alcohol increase the risk of harmful consequences?*
 - iii. *Who should avoid alcohol?*

3. Pre-assessment: The risks of alcohol misuse

10-15 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Use either the pre-assessment handout or the **Risks of Alcohol Misuse Kahoot** for students to assess what they already know about the risks of alcohol misuse.
- B. Use the information in the **Kahoot** or **Google Slide presentation** to explain the terms and definitions. Answer any student questions.

4. Direct instruction:

The short- and long-term risks of alcohol misuse

10-20 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Use the **Risks of Alcohol Misuse Google Slides presentation** to provide information about the short- and long-term risks associated with alcohol misuse. The student-facing slides provide a general overview of the content with additional information in the note section for teachers.
- B. Have students utilize the **Risks of Alcohol Misuse note-taking guide** to follow along and take notes. Students should keep in mind how this information can help protect them and others from the risks of alcohol misuse.

- C. Summarize what students have learned by having students discuss the following question either as a class or using a think-pair-share model.
 - i. *How can this information help you protect yourself and others from the risks of alcohol misuse?*

5. “What to do if” decision-making scenarios

10-20 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Introduce the D.E.C.I.D.E. decision-making model to students if they are not familiar with it. The D.E.C.I.D.E. model is a step-by-step framework used to navigate complex situations, make informed choices, and solve problems. It has students:
 - i. *D- Define the problem*
 - ii. *E- Explore the alternatives*
 - iii. *C- Consider the consequences*
 - iv. *I- Identify your values*
 - v. *D- Decide and take action*
 - vi. *E- Evaluate the decision*
- B. Provide the **“What To Do If” Decision-Making Scenarios handout** either as a physical printout or digital handout. Complete the first scenario with the class to model how students should use the D.E.C.I.D.E. decision-making model to determine what to do.
- C. Have students complete the remainder of the scenarios using the D.E.C.I.D.E. model individually. When students have completed them, review each scenario as a class. Have the class discuss the following questions:
 - i. *Which situation is most realistic?*
 - ii. *What part of the D.E.C.I.D.E. model is most important for these types of decisions?*
 - iii. *How can using this model help support a person's values and goals?*

6. Closing

5-10 MINUTES ⌚

- A. Have students answer the following question to summarize what they have learned by completing an exit ticket or having a think-pair-share discussion.
 - i. *Describe a possible unhealthy outcome related to the decision to engage in alcohol misuse. How could this affect a person's health, their relationships, and their connection to their community?*
- B. Review student responses and identify any topics needing to be readdressed later.



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Assessments

Formative:

- Written responses to the "What to do if" decision-making scenarios activity
- Exit ticket on unhealthy outcomes related to alcohol misuse
- Optional post-assessment using the questions from the pre-assessment

Possible Modifications

Throughout the lesson:

- Provide students with a list of vocabulary words and definitions used within the lesson.
- Provide students with copies of the Google Slides presentations to follow along and review.

Warm-up activity

Use sentence starters such as: "If someone drinks too much alcohol, they can..."

Pre-assessment

Provide physical copies of the pre-assessment handout before completing the Kahoot.

Direct instruction

- For each section, have students work with partners to explain how this information can help protect oneself and others from the risks of alcohol misuse before discussing it as a class.
- After each section, review what information students should have in their note taking chart.

Expanding the lesson for a 90-minute extended block:

- This lesson can be extended to a 90-minute block by engaging the class in additional discussion questions during direct discussion and having students provide written responses before class discussions, and having students create their own "What to do if" scenarios to share and discuss with the class.

Extension/School-to-home Connection Options

Post-Assessment

- Use the same assessment provided at the beginning of the class as a post-assessment to evaluate students' mastery of the content.

Applying the D.E.C.I.D.E model

- Have students identify a decision that they made recently and apply the D.E.C.I.D.E model to it. Have them use the framework to evaluate their decision.

Raising awareness about alcohol overdose

- Have students create a poster or social media post/graphic educating people on the following:
 - Signs of an alcohol overdose using **PUBS**
 - What to do if someone is having an alcohol overdose

Practicing what to do if you observe an alcohol overdose.

- Have students get into pairs and practice the following steps to follow if they observe the signs of an alcohol overdose.
 1. Call 911 for help immediately and provide information to the responders.
 2. While you're waiting, stay and monitor the person closely.
 3. Prevent choking: Roll the person onto their left side and prop up their head to prevent choking on vomit. If they are unconscious, do not give them anything to eat or drink.
 4. Unsure? Call the National Poison Centers at 1-800-222-1222 for free, confidential medical advice 24/7.



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Evaluating your state's laws

OPTION: UNDERAGE DRINKING LAWS

Have students use the [NIAAA State Profiles webpage](#) to identify their state's laws relating to underage drinking including alcohol possession and providing alcohol to underage individuals. Use this research to have them write a five-paragraph essay on the following prompt:

- How effective are your state's laws in preventing underage drinking? Support your argument with examples for your research.

OPTION: MEDICAL AMNESTY LAWS

Have students use the [Withus.org Medical Amnesty Initiative website](#) to identify their state's medical amnesty law (only Wyoming does not have a law) which protects people from prosecution for underage or illegal substance use when they call for help in event of an alcohol or other drug overdose. Use this research to have them write a five-paragraph essay on the following prompt:

- How effective is your state's medical amnesty law in preventing overdose deaths? Support your argument with examples for your research. If your state does not have medical amnesty, what are the arguments for or against it?
- Have students identify a trusted adult in their lives (i.e. parent, family member, coach, community leader, etc.) to have a conversation with about the risks of alcohol misuse.
- **Ways to start the conversation might include:**
 - Talking about what was learned in class including what was surprising.
 - Sharing information that people should know about the risks of alcohol misuse.
 - Asking questions from the pre-assessment.

Additional Prompts:

PROMPT

Why do you think the legal drinking age is 21 in the U.S.?

PROMPT

Why might some people be more at risk from alcohol than others?

PROMPT

What strategies can help someone stay safe in situations where alcohol is present?

PROMPT

How can alcohol misuse affect a person's emotional, mental, and/or physical health over time?

PROMPT

What factors increase a person's risk of developing alcohol use disorder (AUD)? Why are these factors important to understand?

PROMPT

How do the risks of alcohol misuse compare to the risks of misuse of other substances (i.e. cannabis, prescription drugs, etc.)?



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