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## Avoid Alcohol Related Accidents

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"I almost died because of drinking. I drank a whole bottle of Raspberry Vodka when I was 17-years-old. I suffered alcohol poisoning and had to have my stomach pumped," said Julie Mansker, a political science student. She drinks socially.

Aside from alcohol poisoning, there are other risks associated with drinking. "Definitely bad decision making is number one for me. For example: having sex with strangers, having unprotected sex, having unprotected sex with strangers," she said.

Mansker just turned 21-year-old, but seemingly has experienced more than most legal age drinker ever will. She talked about her girlfriend, the same age as her, who not only has drinking related problems, but is coping with drug abuse.

"She drank when she was happy, when she was sad, when she was depressed, when she was nervous. Not much time had passed before she started using drugs. First, she just smoked some pot, later she reached for cocaine and crack." Her friend has been attending Alcohol Anonymous meetings for years, but is still drinking.

Darlene Ventenilla, nursing student at PCC, has worked in numerous bars in the Los Angeles area during the past five years. "Some can handle drinking, some can't," said Ventenilla. She recalls young people often stumbling out of her workplace, making fool of themselves, such as piggybacking naked on some stranger's back on the dark streets of Hollywood. She said that most of them did not remember a thing the following morning.

Ventenilla tended bar in affordable college bars, restaurants, high-end Hollywood clubs and strip bars. "Some people can drink ten beers in a row and be fine, while another gets three drinks and

starts acting stupid," she said.

All 50 states define it as a crime to drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above a proscribed level, 0.08 percent. In California, laws prohibit the driver and passengers from possessing an open container of alcohol in the passenger compartment of a vehicle.

According to [collegedrinkingprevention.org](http://collegedrinkingprevention.org), women are more sensitive to alcohol. "On average, women are smaller than men, therefore equivalent doses of alcohol produce higher levels of concentration in women's bodies. The average female carries more body fat than the average male and body fat contains little water. Consequently, most women have less body water to dilute the alcohol, leaving a higher concentration of alcohol in women's bodies."

"If you want to have the worst year of your life, go ahead, drink and drive," said Kyle Kavanaugh, 21.

Events leading to Kavanaugh's DUI are not unusual or uncommon. "It was an accident," he said. "I was drinking with a friend. The cops pulled me over, suspected that I had been drinking. I had a DUI that cost me close to \$6,000 in fees, increased my insurance payment and I had to take classes that were a waste of money and time." Now he drinks responsibly.

Drinking at more than a moderate level has several risks.

According to PCC Health Services short term risks include bad interactions between alcohol and medications, committing or being a victim of violence or absence from school that can result in expulsion.

Some alcohol related problems don't present themselves right away. Liver disease, heart disease, certain forms of cancer, alcoholism and pancreatitis often develop more gradually as a result of years of heavy drinking, according to [collegedrinkingprevention.org](http://collegedrinkingprevention.org) website.

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