

DON'T LET ALCOHOL PUT A CHILL ON YOUR SUMMER!

CADY Connection – July
Deb Naro, Contributor

Don't let alcohol put a chill on your summer. Communities for Alcohol-and Drug-free Youth (CADY) wants everyone to understand a few simple facts about alcohol. The sunshine, warmth and long days of the coming season provide a wealth of opportunities for recreation and relaxation, but, when mixed with alcohol, these activities can turn dangerous, and even deadly.

“Alcohol consumption results in a gradual dulling of reactions of the brain and nervous system, turning normal situations into potentially dangerous ones,” says Dr. Nicholas A. Pace, M.D., a board member of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. in New York City.

It causes a loss of inhibitions, which leads to aggressiveness, poor judgment, and reckless movements in the water while boating, swimming and diving. It can cause faulty coordination and disorientation in the water, and impair a person's swallowing and breathing reflexes -- both of which are essential to swimming.”

The following statistics underscore the negative consequences of alcohol consumption:

- Drinking may be a factor in 80% of boating fatalities, says the National Transportation Safety Board. According to the National Safety Council, boating accidents are this country's second-largest cause of transportation injuries.
- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, alcohol is involved in an estimated 38% of drowning deaths. Data assembled recently for the Surgeon General shows that this number rises to between 40 and 50% for young males.
- 40-50% of all diving injury victims consume alcoholic beverages, according to the same report.

For heavy drinkers, alcohol consumption during the summer months can contribute to heat prostration. This dehydration also can increase your chances of having a stroke, particularly for individuals with high blood pressure. Hypoglycemia and heart rhythm irregularities are additional dangers of drinking on a hot, sunny day.

With so much fun to be had, why let alcohol put a chill on your summer? People under the age of twenty-one, drivers and people planning water-related recreational activities should stay away from alcohol. Even those who observe the Federal government's recommendations for moderate drinking (two drinks per day for men, one for women) should bear in mind that alcohol may affect them differently during their favorite summer activity.

To access more information about alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse, visit CADY's website at www.cadyinc.org or call 2-1-1, an easy to remember

telephone number that connects callers, at no cost, to information about critical health and human services available in their community. You may also call “Project Monitor Under 21” by calling 2-1-1. Project Monitor Under 21 is an anonymous tool designed to report and prevent underage drinking gatherings. Remember, a call to 2-1-1 may prevent a call to 9-1-1!

###