

IT'S NOT WORTH  
THE RISK

## GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR AGES 17 TO 24

THE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE  
DRINKING OR DRUG  
USE CAN FOLLOW  
YOU EVERYWHERE

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK  
ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND GAMBLING

[Quebec.ca/AlcoolDroguesJeu](http://Quebec.ca/AlcoolDroguesJeu)

Votre  
gouvernement

Québec



true or false

true or false

true or false

true or false

true or false

**1**

**Knowing yourself better helps  
you make your own decisions.**

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# 1 true

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For example, knowing our strengths and abilities well and using them in all areas of our lives gives us greater personal satisfaction. Psychological studies have shown that people who use and develop their strengths and natural abilities experience a higher level of fulfilment and well-being.

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# part1two

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Knowing ourselves better helps us:

1. Have a positive vision of ourselves because we know our strengths and make the most of them
2. Choose to do activities we enjoy
3. Express and assert ourselves more easily in order to:
  - Share our ideas, opinions, and thoughts
  - Communicate our needs
  - Express our feelings and emotions
4. Boost our self-confidence and well-being

5. Recognize others who share our likes

6. React better to difficulties

Ultimately, knowing ourselves well and building on our strengths helps boost our self-confidence and self-esteem. This makes us more likely to make healthy choices about using alcohol or other drugs and gambling, and in any other area of our lives.



**Since cannabis is natural,  
it's not really bad for our health.**

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# 2 false

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Cannabis is a complex substance because it has more than 500 ingredients, including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). Just because cannabis is a plant, that doesn't mean it's healthy or risk free.

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# part 2

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- The health risks and harmful effects of using cannabis are mostly related to a person's cognitive abilities, such as:
    - Judgment
    - Attention
    - Memory
    - The ability to make decisions
  - Mental health risks
    - Psychotic symptoms
    - Symptoms of depression
    - Anxiety
    - Problem use or addiction
  - Physical health risks:
    - Using cannabis can exacerbate certain existing conditions, such as some chronic diseases:
    - Using cannabis increases your heart rate and can affect cardiac rhythm. It can also lead to high blood pressure.
    - Inhaling cannabis smoke can aggravate certain existing respiratory diseases or even make them more likely to occur.
    - Like tobacco smoke, smoke from burning cannabis contains a number of substances that are bad for your health, including certain carcinogens.
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**3**

**If you mix alcohol with an energy drink,  
the alcohol will have less of an effect.**

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# 3 false

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Mixes like that simply mask the symptoms of intoxication due to alcohol. They can make you feel fully in control of yourself even if you're not. You can experience the same negative consequences as if you only had drunk alcohol.

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**Whatever their form, colour,  
or origin, it's impossible to know exactly  
what synthetic drugs contain.**

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# 4 true

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As for any drug sold on the black market, you can never be sure of the contents of synthetic drugs.

A dose might contain:

1. The desired substance in its pure state
2. The substance mixed with other products
3. A completely different substance than you expect.

And that means you may experience:

- No effect at all
  - A partial or full effect
  - An extremely strong, dangerous, and even fatal effect
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**Although poker is a game of chance,  
good players always manage to win.**



# 5 false

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When someone gambles or plays games like poker,  
their skill AND chance both play a role. Chance always  
influences the outcome.

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**On plenty of gambling websites,  
the odds of winning are higher during  
the free trial periods than when you're  
betting with real money.**



Research has shown that during free trial periods, certain sites are designed so that players have a higher chance of winning, giving them an incentive to bet using real money. But when real money is on the line, the likelihood of winning goes down.



**It's better to let someone sleep  
if they've consumed a lot of alcohol  
in a short period of time.**

# 7 false

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“Binge drinking” or drinking a large quantity of alcohol in a short period of time can lead to alcohol poisoning and death.

The signs of alcohol poisoning are:

1. Greatly diminished reactions—or none at all
2. Loss of consciousness or deep sleep
3. Difficulty breathing
4. Repeated vomiting

5. Excessive perspiration

6. Hypothermia

If someone has one or more of these symptoms, call 911 immediately and do not leave them alone.

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**Someone who always uses the same substance or the same amount can predict exactly how it will affect them.**

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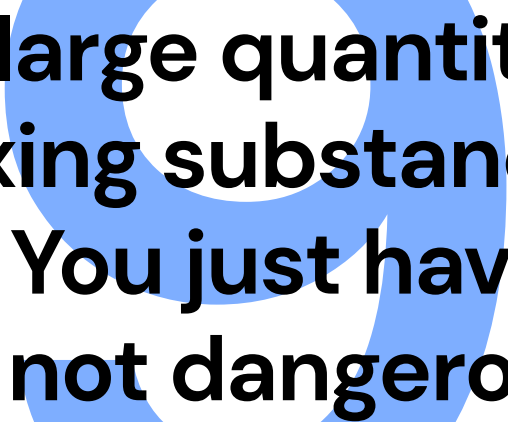
# 8 false

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A number of factors go into how alcohol or another drug will affect a person. This is called the “law of effect.”

When any of the following three factors changes, the experience changes too:

1. **Substance:**  
product quality (alcohol percentage or drug composition), the way or how fast the product is consumed, and so on
2. **Individual:** age, height, weight, physical state (fatigue, presence of an illness, empty stomach, etc.), state of mind, mood, and so on
3. **Circumstances:** location, ambience, time of day, who you're with, and so on



**Indulging in large quantities of drugs or alcohol or mixing substances has minimal consequences. You just have to rest longer. It's not dangerous.**



According to the *Banque de données communes des urgences du Québec* database, in 2018–2019 there were 13,890 emergency room admissions involving people under the age of 24 who had been drinking or using drugs. They were seen because alcohol or drugs had caused behavioural problems, alcohol poisoning (loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, etc.), and mental health problems, and for withdrawal symptoms.

10

**Driving a vehicle under the influence of cannabis sharpens your reflexes.**



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# 10 false

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Although you may feel like you're in control and more careful, using cannabis impairs your senses and leads to poor physical coordination and loss of balance. Driving a vehicle after smoking cannabis can cause accidents and injuries. Driving under the influence of cannabis is illegal, just like for alcohol or other drugs. The police can detect it, and it can result in fines and legal proceedings.

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**11**

**Prescribed or not,  
opioids involve risk.**

Opioids are natural or laboratory-produced substances.

These substances are called “psychoactive” because they affect the brain, more specifically, the parts of the brain that control pain. Opioids have an analgesic effect and can produce euphoria. Even when prescribed by a doctor, opioids can be a health risk if used improperly.

The main risks are addiction and overdose.

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12

**It is dangerous to use medication  
prescribed for someone else.**



You should never share or try medication prescribed for someone else, including friends and family.

The effects of a prescription depend on the product, of course, but also on the person using it. A medication used by one person can be dangerous for someone else because of their weight, age, sex, health status, or other medications they're taking. It is also important to follow the recommended dosage when taking a drug prescribed for you. Your pharmacist can tell you everything you need to know about your medication or, if you're unsure about anything, dial 811.



**13**

**Excessive use of the Internet  
(such as online games, social media)  
has no potential effect whatsoever.**

# 13 false

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People who frequently play games online may experience the following effects or consequences:

1. Concerns about their Internet use
2. Unpleasant physical symptoms when they're not online
3. Difficulty reducing or controlling their online time
4. Loss of interest in activities that aren't online
5. Embarrassment or unease in being honest about the true extent of their online activities
6. Going online to escape difficulties or relieve a bad mood, stress, or sadness



# 1

**How many alcoholic drinks  
can you have before your brain  
starts to be affected?**

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Q&A game

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**A**

It depends on your weight,  
but about three per 100 lb.

**B**

It depends on your sex:  
men can drink more

**C**

It depends how tired  
you are:  
more tired = fewer drinks

**D**

One drink affects  
the brain, for everyone  
and in all circumstances

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# 1

## ANSWER D

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**One drink affects the brain,  
for everyone and  
in all circumstances.**

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# part 1 two

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Like all drugs, alcohol is a psychoactive substance that affects how the brain works after the first drink.

Drinking alcohol: Affects communication between nerve cells

- Distorts your judgment and perception of risk • Impairs your behaviour
- Reduces your physical coordination

It can make you feel chill • More confident • More emotional or excited

The more you drink, the greater the consequences!

You have even shakier judgment • Slower reaction time • Blurred vision

- Poor balance • Slurred speech • You may get angry or sad
  - Have trouble thinking clearly
-

# 2

## When you're at a party or other event, what's the best strategy to reduce the risks related to drugs or alcohol?

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Q&A game

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**A**

Bring non-alcoholic drinks and alternate between drinks with and without alcohol. Don't drink on an empty stomach

**B**

Decide not to drink and just say no when someone offers you alcohol

**C**

Decide in advance to limit your drinking or not to use certain substances and tell one of your friends who's there about your decision

**D**

Avoid mixing substances, for example, drinking alcohol and using drugs, using more than one drug, or drinking alcohol mixed with energy drinks

**E**

Plan ahead of time how you will get home

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# 2

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**All these answers are good!**

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# 3

## Which of these effects may be related to cannabis use?

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Q&A game

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**A**

A sense of well-being and relaxation

- An easier time socializing
- Fits of laughter
- A feeling of heightened senses
- Feeling like you're more creative

**B**

Trouble concentrating

- Poor short-term memory
- Drowsiness

**C**

Rapid heart rate

- Poor physical coordination
- Loss of balance

**D**

Increased appetite

- Thirst
- Swelling of the blood vessels (red eyes)

**E**

Hallucinations

- Anxiety

# 3 ALL THESE ANSWERS ARE GOOD

Although some effects may be pleasant or tempting, there are risks associated with cannabis use, including mental health risks. Using cannabis can cause psychosis in certain people and high levels of anxiety. Using cannabis or drinking alcohol impairs brain function, leading to poorer judgment. You lose your inhibitions, which means you may act inappropriately or in a way you didn't really want to. You're more at risk of making decisions you wouldn't have made otherwise and doing things that could have negative consequences. Over the long term, excessive and regular cannabis use can lead to decreased motivation and interest, as well as memory and concentration difficulties.

**4**

**Of all these effects and risks,  
which ARE NOT associated with excessive  
alcohol consumption  
(four to five drinks or more in one session)  
OR repeated excessive drinking?**

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Q&A game

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**A**

- Significantly higher risk of accidents
- Increase in unsafe sexual behaviour

**B**

- Effects on brain development that can cause impulsive behaviour

**C**

- Influence on the development of certain cancers, liver diseases, high blood pressure, and brain injuries

**D**

- Higher risk of abuse or addiction
- Feelings of depression

**E**

- Relationship problems
- Problems at work or school
- Criminal behaviour
  - Delinquency
  - Violence

# **NONE OF THESE ANSWERS**

# **4**

**ALL these risks and effects are associated with excessive drinking. You also need to keep in mind that as with cannabis or any other drug, your judgement is impaired and you lose your inhibitions when you're under the influence of alcohol. You could behave inappropriately. You're more likely to make decisions that you wouldn't otherwise have made, or do things you may regret and that could have negative consequences.**

**5**

**Since the 2000s, alcohol  
and drug use among young people  
age 17 to 24 has**

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Q&A game

**A**

Increased

**B**

Decreased

**C**

Stayed the same

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# 5

## ANSWER B

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**In the last 20 years, alcohol and drug use among young people has gone down. There has also been a decline in gambling.**

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**According to the World Health Organization, what percentage of deaths among people age 20 to 39 can be attributed to alcohol?**

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Q&A game

**A**

12%

**B**

5%

**C**

25%

**D**

60%

**E**

0.08%

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**6**  
**ANSWER C**

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**25%, or one in four deaths.**

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# Help and information resources

## LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Someone will answer your questions  
in confidence 24/7.

### DRUGS: HELP AND REFERRAL

1-800-265-2626 or 514-527-2626 (Montreal area)

### GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL

1-800-461-0140 or 514-527-0140 (Montreal area)

### TEL-JEUNES

1-800-263-2266 or [teljeunes.com](http://teljeunes.com)

You can chat with a professional by text  
at 514-600-1002 (between 8 a.m. and 10:30 p.m.).

You can also go to [Quebec.ca/AlcoolDroguesJeu](http://Quebec.ca/AlcoolDroguesJeu)