

## Guys' and girls' bodies are different

**You are more vulnerable to alcohol & its effects than guys are.**

Females generally have **more fat and less water in their bodies**. Alcohol is water soluble, so less water in the body translates to a higher blood alcohol concentration.

Females have **less of the active enzyme alcohol dehydrogenase** which begins to break down alcohol in the stomach lining. Less enzyme means more alcohol in the system.

**Changes in hormone levels** during a female's menstrual cycle may affect how she metabolizes alcohol.

### Girls are drinking more than they used to!

Boys have cut back on heavy drinking, but girls haven't.

## Delay your Drinking from Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

Canada now has a set of low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines that include a section for teens.

The guidelines consistently recommend that **women drink less than men**.

## If You are a Girl...

**What you should know about alcohol**



## What matters for girls who drink?

### Social & Romantic Relationships

Teenage girls are more likely to **drink to fit in** with their friends than boys. Girls often are **introduced to alcohol by their boyfriends** who may be older and more likely to drink. Girls are more **influenced by their boyfriend's friends** than their own friends.

### Sexual Encounters & Assault

Alcohol impairs judgment leading to the **increase of risky sexual behavior**.

Girls who drink are more likely to have unprotected sex than girls who don't drink, increasing chances of sexually transmitted infections, HIV transmission, and unplanned pregnancy. Girls are also more likely to have sex they regret when they've been drinking.

The likelihood of **sexual assault** by an acquaintance increases if the offender, the victim, or both, drink alcohol. About half of all reported sexual assault cases include consumption of alcohol by the offender, the victim, or both.

### Physical Health & Disease

The more alcohol a girl drinks (between her first period and first full-term pregnancy), the greater her risk of developing **breast cancer**—an increase of 11%.

Women develop **liver disease** over a shorter period of time, and after drinking less alcohol than men. Drinking during the teen years may compromise bone health and increase risk of **osteoporosis**. Alcohol can also disrupt menstrual cycles.

### Mental Health & Depression

Girls who drink are twice as likely to **consider suicide** than nondrinkers.

Girls often drink to **improve their mood** or **increase their confidence**. Girls who are heavy drinkers are more likely than boys **to drink to escape problems**.

### Girls & Their Future

Girls who drink face higher risks of **trouble with family, rocky romantic relationships, emotional distress, physical health problems** and **job instability**.

## Why some girls drink...

**Girls are more likely to drink if they have:**

- ◆ Negative self-image or self-esteem
- ◆ Early onset of puberty
- ◆ High-levels of anxiety
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ History of sexual abuse
- ◆ Poor academic performance
- ◆ Strained relationship with parents
- ◆ Low parental monitoring
- ◆ Parents or siblings who drink
- ◆ Friends who drink (and post photos online about it) or
- ◆ Live in areas with high crime rates

