

# My best friend ...

**gets so annoying:** What starts out as “funny,” “fun-seeking,” “relaxing”... soon becomes bad moods, crankiness and complaining. If repeated, personality changes. Unfortunately for many, this leads to drinking even more, and more frequently (Wardell, Read et al. 2012, Wardell, Read et al. 2013).

**tells everyone what I’ve confided:** Alcohol can change what started as a social personality to very anti-social; someone you can’t trust—research shows alcohol releases emotions the sober person normally keeps inside (Hirsh, Galinsky et al. 2011).

**rear-ended my other best friend, then drove away:** Alcohol increases acts of aggression and violence towards self and others, impairs driving and increases various types of accidents. An estimated 40% of all fatal traffic accidents are alcohol-related (CDC 2012).

**is aggressive; picks fights:** You may not recall what you did, but the alcohol-caused amnesia won’t be allowed in court if that’s where you (and your parents) wind up. Your short-term memory may be lost, but your other cognitive functions—planning, attention, and social skills—aren’t impaired, although anyone who saw you may think otherwise (Pressman and Caudill 2013).

**punched him; for no reason:** Alcohol and medications can induce violence; especially antidepressants, amphetamines, benzodiazepines and steroids (2014).

**puked on me at the dance ...** *“not once but a real good vomiting. I took him home, cleaned him up, I thought he’d be OK.”* The coroner said he died because he choked on his own vomit.

**will do anything to win a dare:** 5000 youth die each year in the US from drinking too much alcohol. They rapidly drink and even after they pass out, their blood alcohol continues to rise. That shuts down vital functions like breathing, their heart and the gag reflex that prevents choking. Scientists have shown that binge drinking in adolescence can permanently damage brain cells (Strohle, Wolters et al. 2012) and change the way the brain makes proteins from DNA—changes that bring about problems thinking, anxiety and alcoholism years later in life (Pandey, Sakharkar et al. 2015).

**Never wait just a little longer to call 911 if you think the person is in danger**

Blood alcohol can keep rising. If you have the slightest doubt:

**STAY WITH THE PERSON, TRY TO KEEP THEM SITTING UP: CALL 911.** Signs of Alcohol Poisoning:

- Mental confusion, stupor, passed out, coma
- Vomiting
- Slow breathing (under eight breaths/ minute)
- Seizures
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

**...said no one, ever.**

# Where’s your life going?