



## Hazy Love: Drugs, Alcohol & Sexual Health

### Beer Goggles

Sexual arousal all by itself can impair judgement but when you add drugs or alcohol to the equation... well, things can get a little messy. In small amounts, alcohol helps us to unwind, talk more freely, and socialize during uncomfortable situations but too much drugs and alcohol can impair our decision-making abilities.

Consider this...

- Many unwanted pregnancies occur when partners are too drunk and/or high to use contraceptives responsibly.
- Not knowing your partner's sexual history and not bothering or forgetting to use a condom can put you at risk for contracting a Sexually Transmitted Infection.
- When drunk or high, you may become sexually involved with people who you would not choose as partners when sober.
- Alcohol plays a role in some 70% of date rape cases and people may take advantage of you in this situation. Remember--sex without consent is sexual assault.
- Sharing needles or other drug equipment can greatly increase your risk for contracting HIV and Hepatitis C.

### Will the Real Date Rape Drug Please Stand up!

There has been a lot of talk about Rohypnol and GHB commonly known as the "Date Rape Drugs." These drugs act as a hypnotic sedative that enhances the effects of alcohol leading to decreased inhibition, sleepiness, and memory loss. They can be slipped easily into alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, dissolve quickly and may give your drink a bitter taste. However, don't be fooled- alcohol is still the number one date rape drug! In fact, alcohol is involved in sexual assaults ten times more often than the "Date Rape Drug."

## **Mind Blowing Sex?**

As you probably already know, drugs and alcohol are associated with lots of health risks, but did you know that they could also negatively affect sexual performance and enjoyment? They may increase desire for sexual activity for individuals, but performance can decrease. Even moderate amounts spoil the capacity to perform and respond resulting in difficulty in keeping an erection, premature ejaculation, reduced vaginal lubrication and fewer or no orgasms. In fact, regular alcohol use is a contributor to impotence. Quite simply, sexual pleasure is more difficult to achieve after a few drinks.

## **Condoms and Cocktails**

Risky sexual practices do not revolve around neglecting to wear a condom. Sexual health has to do with the lifestyle you lead, the decisions you make, leading to potentially unsafe behavior. This includes everything from choosing to get regular STI tests, knowing your contraceptive alternatives, and managing your drug and alcohol consumption.

## **So, Remember...**

*Always* carry condoms and use a condom for all types of sexual activity at all times with all partners.

Use a reliable form of contraception. If you forget, or the condom breaks, call your family doctor or Planned Parenthood to find out about the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) a.k.a “The Morning After Pill.”

Talk to your partner(s) about safer sex, STI/HIV testing, and the boundaries of your sexual relationship. It is much easier to negotiate safer sex with someone you know.

Do not share needles for drug use.

Trust your instincts: do not leave your drink unattended - even briefly, bring or buy your own beverages - including non-alcoholic drinks, and have a solid plan for getting home safely.

Look out for each other: help each other make positive, consistent decisions and help one another to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

## **A Word About Self-Esteem...**

People with lower self-esteem may be more easily influenced by peer pressure to use drugs and alcohol. If friends are pressuring you, they are not really your friends. If a partner pressures you, it is not a healthy relationship. You deserve better - find people who respect you!

Some youth may use drugs and/or alcohol to cope with emotions dealing with relationships, family, school, and sexual identity. Getting drunk or high will not make these problems go away. Remember that you are not alone and there are people out there to help you!!

## **To Sum It All Up...**

Sex can be a positive part of our lives. Unfortunately, inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs may prevent us from making the best decisions about our sexual health and can rob us of an exciting, fun, and intimate experience. Sex is best when we are thinking clearly, responsible and in control of the situation. If you

need drugs and alcohol in order to have sex, maybe you are not really ready to have sex at all!

**Some great community resources:**

**Planned Parenthood - Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre:**

For hassle free, confidential sexual health information  
47 St. Clare Avenue  
St. John's, NL  
579-1009 or Toll Free: 1- 877 No Myths!

**Sexual Assault Crisis & Prevention Centre**

24hrs help line for anyone with questions or concerns about healthy relationships, violence, abuse and assault...not only for "crisis."  
747-7757  
Toll Free 1-800-726-2743

**AIDS Committee Newfoundland & Labrador**

For anyone with questions about AIDS/HIV risks, treatments, programs etc.  
579-8656  
Toll Free 1-800-563-1575

**Royal Newfoundland Constabulary**

Sexual Assault Unit  
729-8001  
RCMP toll free provincial line  
1-800-709-7267

**Addictions Services**

752- 4919

**Narcotics Anonymous**

**1-800-564-0228**

**Alcoholics Anonymous**

(709) 579-5215

**NGALE**

(Newfoundland Gays & Lesbians for Equality)  
(709) 579-8656

**LBGT MUN**

(Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay & Transgender at MUN)  
(709) 737- 4366  
[munsuwrc@gmail.com](mailto:munsuwrc@gmail.com)

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Alcohol & Sexual Health”  
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St. John’s

If you have further questions regarding sexual decision making or would like to see a health care provider regarding any sexual health matter, please contact us.

## **Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!**

**Location:**

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John’s, NL, A1C 2J9

**Hours:**

Monday: 9am - 4:30pm  
Tuesday: 9am - 4:30pm  
Wednesday: 9am - 4:30 pm  
Thursday: 12pm – 6:00pm  
Friday: 9am - 4:30pm

**Phone:**

579-1009  
Toll Free: 1-877-NO MYTHS  
(1-877-666-9847)

**Website:**

[www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com](http://www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com)

**Email:**

[pp.nlshc@gmail.com](mailto:pp.nlshc@gmail.com)

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