

Medication and drug interaction

Mixing alcohol and medications can be dangerous

Mixing alcohol and drugs can be dangerous – whether you're taking prescribed medication or an over-the-counter remedy. Older people need to be particularly careful, as they are more likely to take medications and have an overall weakened health status.

There are many medications that should never be mixed with alcohol. Others should be taken with caution.

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What can happen?

- The effects of the medication can become dangerously strong
Alcohol can increase the effects of hypnotics, sleeping pills and sedatives. This can lead to increased drowsiness, coma and even death.
- The side effects of the medication can get worse
For example, mixing alcohol with aspirin increases the risk of getting stomach ulcers
- The medication can become less effective
For example, mixing alcohol with diabetics medication can prevent it from working properly and may contribute to dangerous instability in blood sugar levels. Alcohol can also interfere with the efficacy of antiretroviral drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS.



take action

Always read the labels and leaflets that come with your medication. Some medications should never be mixed with alcohol; others must be taken with caution. You should check with your doctor or pharmacist to see whether it's okay to drink alcohol while you're taking the medication.

Don't take anything for granted. Remember that people react differently to medication, to alcohol and combinations of the two.

talkingalcohol.com

is a site dedicated to helping people make informed choices about alcohol

other websites

These sites contain further information that you may find useful. However, SABMiller is not responsible for the content of these sites.

- Alcohol Screening.org, Alcohol-Medication Interactions
www.alcoholscreening.org/Learn-More.aspx?topicID=8&articleID=37
- Drugs.com, Drug Interactions Checker
www.drugs.com/drug_interactions.html

- Eldercare Team, When Seniors Combine Drugs and Alcohol
www.eldercareteam.com/public/739.cfm
- University of Rochester Health Service, Alcohol-Drug Interactions
www.rochester.edu/uhs/healthtopics/Alcohol/interactions.html
- NIAAA (US), Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol With Medicines
www.pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Medicine/medicine.htm

