

## Health Risks

IECC recognizes that the use of illicit drugs and alcohol abuse may lead to severe health risks.

Health risks associated with alcohol abuse and/or illicit drug use:

- Violence – fights, vandalism, sexual assaults, homicide and suicide are far more likely to occur when drinking is involved.
- Unprotected sex – individuals are less likely to use safer sex practices when drinking, which can result in unplanned pregnancy and infection with a sexually transmitted disease.
- Serious injury – over 53% of all fatal automobile accidents in the U.S. involve alcohol use.
- Addiction – although anyone can become addicted, those with a family history of alcohol or other drug addiction are at least four times more likely to develop alcoholism.
- Lowered resistance to disease/illness.
- Increased risk of ulcers, heart disease, and cancers of the liver, mouth, throat and stomach.
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)/Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE) – women who drink during pregnancy may give birth to infants with physical deformities, brain damage and mental retardation. If a woman is pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or suspects she is pregnant; she should abstain from alcohol and other drug use.
- Illicit drug use may result in:
  - Physical or psychological dependency;
  - A craving or inability to stop using drugs;
  - Adverse effects on the body systems; injury due to motor vehicle crashes, assaults or other unintended acts;
  - Disruption of personal relationships and work habits;
  - Ineligibility for some types of employment
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs inhibits your ability to act responsibly or react quickly. Below are a few safety tips you should keep in mind:
  - Limit your alcohol intake.
  - Avoid combining alcohol with prescription medicines and club drugs; the combination can be dangerous.
  - Never leave your drink unattended or accept a pre-poured drink from a stranger.
  - Buzzed or drunk driving is deadly and illegal; leave your vehicle parked and find other transportation. Your life and others' lives depend upon your decision.