

TAKE A



Shot Q&A

Q. I blacked out last weekend and I'm super embarrassed. How does this happen?



I don't remember getting home last night. I hope I didn't do anything stupid. Where is my phone?!

Sound familiar? A blackout, or alcohol-induced amnesia, is different from passing out. During a blackout, the person is conscious, awake, and engaging in conversations and activities, however their memory recall (once sobered up) is spotty or nonexistent.

The tricky part about blacking out is it's not always obvious to onlookers, or the intoxicated person. Memory impairment occurs before motor impairment, so just because you aren't a sloppy mess doesn't mean you'll remember everything the next day. Blackouts occur when excess alcohol impairs the hippocampus, preventing memories from being stored at all, or only in fragments.

The hippocampus also plays a role in decision-making and problem-solving. This is where our post-drinking anxiety and regret often comes into play. Sober Alex would never unleash the whizzinator in a campus parking lot full of security cameras, but Drunk Alex didn't even question it... until Alex woke up in detox. Hence the importance of a functioning hippocampus.

Everyone knows that peeing in public can get you into trouble, but so can sex under the influence. An intoxicated person cannot legally consent to sexual activity, *even if they verbally consent*. BTW failure to recognize that someone is too drunk for sex isn't a legal defense.

If you're thinking all this legal talk is taking the fun out of your future drunken hook-ups, don't worry. Too much alcohol will do that before you even get started. The term rhyming with "whiskey chick" wasn't coined for nothing! When inebriated, the desire is still there but ability is not; Men have difficulty getting and keeping an erection, while females experience difficulty climaxing.

The good news is blacking out and all the embarrassing consequences can be easily avoided. Tips include: eating solid meals before consuming alcohol, drinking in moderation, pacing yourself, and having a plan for how you want your night to end. Keeping these things in mind will help you remember the fun college adventures rather than losing those memories to alcohol-induced amnesia and regret.

MAYFACT:

Over 1/3 of Mavericks determine in advance not to exceed a set number of drinks.
(NCHA, 2016)



GOT A QUESTION

about substance use?

Email it to: healthservices@mnsu.edu

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

Student Health Services
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