Alcoholism: Pros And Cons Essay, Research Paper

The following essay will introduce you to pros and cons of drinking. It will also give you a clear understanding in why you shouldn’t drink alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant; it impairs your ability to drive, slows down your reaction time and causes you to make some risky decisions that you wouldn’t normally take. This essay will also help you comprehend how and why things happen, because of alcohol.

Alcoholism can kill in many different ways, and in general, people who drink regularly have a higher rate of deaths from injury, violence, and some cancers. The earlier a person begins drinking heavily, the greater their chance of developing serious illnesses later on. Any protection that occurs with moderate alcohol intake appears to be confined to adults over 60 who have risks for heart disease. Adults who drink moderately (about one drink a day) have a lower mortality rate than their non-drinking peers, their risk for untimely death increases with heavier drinking. Alcohol may not cause cancer, but it probably does increase the carcinogenic effects of other substances, such as cigarette smoke. Daily drinking increases the risk for lung, gastric, pancreatic, colorectal, urinary tract, liver, brain cancers, and leukemia. About 75% of cancers of the esophagus and 50% of cancers of the mouth, and throat are attributed to alcoholism. (Wine appears to pose less danger for these cancers than beer or hard liquor.) Smoking combined with drinking enhances risks for most of these cancers dramatically. When women consume as little as one drink a day, they may increase their chances of breast cancer by as much as 30%.

In the liver, alcohol converts to an even more toxic substance, which can cause substantial damage. Not eating when drinking and consuming a variety of alcoholic beverages are also factors that increase the risk for liver damage. People with alcoholism are also at higher risk for hepatitis B and C, potentially chronic liver diseases than can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. People with alcoholism should be immunized against hepatitis B; they may need a higher-than-normal dose of the vaccine for it to be effective.

Alcohol has widespread effects on the brain. The use of alcohol, however, eventually produces depression and confusion. In chronic cases, alcoholism can lead to mental disturbances. Alcohol can also cause milder problems, including headaches (especially after drinking red wine). Except in severe cases, the damage is not permanent and abstinence nearly always leads to recovery of normal mental function. Alcohol may increase the risk for hemorrhage stroke (caused by bleeding in the brain), although it may protect against stroke caused by narrowed arteries. Alcohol plays a major role in more than half of all automobile accidents. Alcohol also increases the risk of accidental injuries from many other causes. Drinking and driving is dangerous to yourself and others around you. The penalty for drinking and driving is Driving Under the Influence (DUI). If your Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) registers over .08, you are Driving Under the Influence. After having one drink it takes approximately one hour for your body to burn off the alcohol. You can’t depend on yourself to be able to drive after an hour, because everyone processes alcohol differently and you might even feel the effects long after you’ve been drinking. Your BAC is based on your body weight, how much you have had to drink, the amount of food you may have eaten before drinking, the length of time over which you have had alcohol, and the speed at which your own body processes alcohol (once again, everyone is different). There is no way to make your body burn alcohol faster; eating, drinking coffee, exercising, or taking a cold shower may make you feel better, but they have no effect on your rate that alcohol is processed.

Alcohol can also create hormonal effects. Alcoholism increases the levels of the female hormone estrogen and reduces the levels of the male hormone testosterone, factors that contribute to impotence in men. I placed this statement here, because I personally believe that men, such as myself, should be aware on how alcohol effects a “male’s ability to perform”. Domestic violence is a common consequence of alcohol abuse. For women, the most serious risk factor for injury from domestic violence may be a history of alcohol abuse in her male partner. Alcoholism in parents also increases the risk for violent behavior and abuse toward their children. Children of alcoholics tend to do worse academically than others, have a higher incidence of depression, anxiety, and stress and lower self-esteem than their peers. Children who were diagnosed with major depression between the ages of six and 12 were more likely to have alcoholic parents or relatives, than those children who do not have parents who are alcoholics. Alcoholic households are less cohesive, have more conflicts, and their members are less independent and expressive than households with non-alcoholics or recovering alcoholic parents. In addition to their own inherited risk for later alcoholism, children of alcoholics have serious coping problems that may be life long. Alcoholic parents are at higher risk for divorced and for psychiatric symptoms. The only events with greater psychological impact on children are sexual and physical abuse.

During pregnancy and infant development, one must take extreme precautions.

Even moderate amounts of alcohol may have damaging effects on the developing fetus, including low birth weight and an increased risk for miscarriage. High amounts can cause fetal alcohol syndrome, which can result in mental and growth retardation. There is also a higher risk for leukemia in infants of women who drink any type of alcoholic beverages during pregnancy. From what you have read, you can see that alcohol has a great influence on the body. Many people drink alcoholic beverages and believe that it will not have an affect, but they are wrong! Alcohol plays a very disturbing role and affects you physically, mentally and spiritually. Personally, drinking alcoholic beverages is something that doesn’t have to be part of your life. Alcohol is a want, not a need, and if you live a life without alcohol you will definitely live a life of happiness. Don’t take my word for it? try it!

Word count: 1,030