HERE ARE THE STRAIGHT FACTS...

About Alcohol.*

Alcohol abuse is a pattern of problem drinking that results in health consequences, social, problems, or both. However, alcohol dependence, or alcoholism, refers to a disease that is characterized by abnormal alcohol-seeking behavior that leads to impaired control over drinking.

Short-term effects of alcohol use include:
- distorted vision, hearing, and coordination
- altered perceptions and emotions
- impaired judgment
- bad breath; hangovers

Long-term effects of heavy alcohol use include:
- loss of appetite
- vitamin deficiencies
- stomach ailments
- skin problems
- sexual impotence
- liver damage
- heart and central nervous system damage
- memory loss

How Do I Know if I, or Someone Close, Has a Drinking Problem?

Here are some quick clues:

Inability to control drinking--it seems that regardless of what you decide beforehand, you frequently wind up drunk
Using alcohol to escape problems
A change in personality--turning from Dr. Jekyl to Mr. Hyde
A high tolerance level--drinking just about everybody under the table
Blackouts--sometimes not remembering what happened while drinking
Problems at work or in school as a result of drinking
Concern shown by family and friends about drinking

If you have a drinking problem, or if you suspect you have a drinking problem, there are many others out there like you, and there is help available. Talk to a school counselor, a friend, or a parent.