

## AN UNFASHIONABLE RISK

There always seems to be some new trend with alcohol as people seek out novel ways to get drunk. Vaporizing alcohol first came into popularity in 2004 but the fad quickly faded. Unfortunately, the trend has returned. Also known as “smoking” alcohol, this dangerous practice is frequently attempted using a plastic bottle, cork, and a bicycle pump. When the pressure inside a sealed bottle of alcohol changes rapidly, the alcohol immediately turns to vapor, and that vapor can then be inhaled. Alcoholic vapors can also be created by heating alcohol or by pouring alcohol over dry ice.



## YOUR HEALTH - UP IN SMOKE

When you drink alcohol, the stomach and intestines process it and release it into the bloodstream. The liver then metabolizes most of the alcohol. The time between consumption of the first drink and the peak of blood alcohol concentration is approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Vaporizing alcohol hastens these effects. The alcohol enters the system through the mucous membrane of the lungs where it then travels to the brain and bloodstream. Intoxication can happen almost instantaneously and alcohol poisoning becomes a very real and scary possibility.

The inhaled alcohol vapor that enters the bloodstream is far more potent than that which enters the system through drinking. It's also difficult to gauge how much alcohol you've consumed by vaporizing. And when you eliminate the stomach from the process, you're cutting out one of the body's key defenses against alcohol poisoning: vomiting.

Inhaling alcohol vapors negatively impacts the mouth, nasal passages, and lungs. The vapors dry out these sensitive areas, creating a greater risk for infection, and the fumes may irritate the lungs, leading to wheezing. When used with dry ice, the fumes may damage the lining of the lungs.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to [www.intheknowzone.com](http://www.intheknowzone.com) for more information on substance abuse. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

**Don't stay in the dark.  
Get In the Know!**

**in the know**

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# VAPORIZING ALCOHOL

*making alcohol  
more dangerous*





### EVEN MORE DANGERS LURK

The rapid and intense intoxication that comes from inhaling alcohol vapors carries a greater risk for addiction and dependence. This delivery method is similar to drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine as users get instant gratification. The buzz that comes with vaporizing alcohol is short-lived, causing users to inhale more and more vapors to maintain the feeling. Alcohol is an addictive substance all by itself, but when it causes such instantaneous yet brief effects, it's that much more risky.

There are also numerous long-term consequences to consider with vaporizing alcohol. While this method of delivery may spare your liver, the alcohol still affects the rest of your body. Excessive alcohol consumption may lead to dementia, stroke, psychiatric problems, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer. Repeatedly inhaling these vapors may also cause serious respiratory issues.

Wide-ranging personal problems, including relationship issues, domestic violence, and difficulties in school and work, frequently develop as well because of excessive alcohol consumption, vaporized or otherwise.

### MYTHS ABOUND

Vaporizing alcohol's rise in popularity is due in part to several myths that surround the practice. Many people believe that by inhaling alcohol, they are avoiding the calories that come with alcoholic beverages. However, ethanol, the active ingredient in alcohol, has calories and they are still absorbed by the body when inhaled.



Those under the age of 21 might be tempted to try "smoking" alcohol because they believe that it's legal. But consuming alcohol, in any form, is still illegal if you're not 21 or over. Vaporizing alcohol has been

touted as a way to experience the effects of alcohol without the hangover. But many users report experiencing hangover-like symptoms, including nausea, headaches, lightheadedness, and dizziness.

There is also the belief that by inhaling alcohol vapors, it's easier to hide your drinking from others. This is also untrue. Just like with drinking alcohol, your breath will smell of it and your motor skills and thought processes will be impaired. And finally, there is the myth that breathing alcohol vapors does not affect your blood alcohol concentration, essentially making it "safe" to drink and drive. Again, this is not true. Alcohol still enters your bloodstream, your blood alcohol concentration reflects it, and you become unable to safely operate a motor vehicle.

### HELP YOURSELF (AND OTHERS)

If you've already exposed yourself to the dangers of vaporizing alcohol, now is the time to stop this. And if you're finding it difficult to quit, don't be afraid to ask for help. Support groups are available in many communities and there are online resources that can provide assistance, too.

You can also be a valuable asset to friends or family members who have become addicted to "smoking" alcohol. Urge them to get help, assist with finding resources, listen, and provide as much support as possible.

Addiction is a painful and trying process for all involved, but with time and dedication, the cycle can be broken.



### PROTECT YOURSELF

Don't let all the flashy adjectives surrounding this practice fool you. It may be a new way to consume alcohol, but terms like "revolutionary" and "trendy" just sugarcoat an activity that can have dire consequences. It's an easy way to make something dangerous sound like a good idea.

The best way to bypass the risks that come with "smoking" alcohol is to avoid it altogether. The potentially deadly side effects of a quick high are not worth it. Do your body a favor. Don't believe the hype about vaporizing alcohol - it's just smoke and mirrors.

**Excessive alcohol consumption may lead to neurological impairments, psychiatric problems, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer.**