

Many times individuals are unaware of the effects of drinking alcohol on medication. Certain medications such as antidepressants should never be mixed with alcohol. Another common mistake when individuals ask a doctor if they can drink on medication is that the amount is not discussed. Since the liver is responsible for metabolizing drugs other than alcohol, potentially dangerous alcohol-drug interactions can occur. If you take prescription or over-the-counter medications, ask your doctor for advice about alcohol intake. Recognize that even herbal medicines and supplements can have adverse interactions with alcohol. Many cold and allergy medications, over-the-counter painkillers, and vitamins come in a time release coated capsule. It is important to know that alcohol dissolves the time release coating on these types of capsules, releasing the full dose immediately instead of being properly delayed as designed.



Drug Effects Interactions with Alcohol

Marijuana - A 2-4 hour high indicated by bloodshot eyes, slowed motor skills and reaction time, impaired recall, distorted perceptions of time and space. Exacerbates the sedative effect and increases the level of intoxication of both drugs.

Cocaine - Mood elevation, euphoria, increased energy, alertness, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, decreased appetite. Alcohol may be used to counteract anxiety and tweaking effects of cocaine. Potentially very dangerous because alcohol also elevates blood pressure, increasing risk for heart attack and stroke.

Hallucinogens - Altered perception of all senses, euphoria, anxiety, depersonalization increased body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, loss of appetite, sleeplessness. Unknown, may counteract anxiety

Sedatives & Tranquilizers - Effects are similar to alcohol, but aggression is less likely, lowered inhibitions, slowed pulse and breathing, lowered blood pressure, severe drowsiness, depressed cardiac and pulmonary functions which can be fatal

Antidepressants - Medication may become ineffective and lessen their benefit, the side effects from your medication could also worsen. Some antidepressants cause drowsiness, and so does alcohol. Mixing the two could make you sleepy, which is dangerous in situations where you need to be alert, such as driving, or at work. A monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), can be very dangerous causing a dangerous spike in blood pressure, leading to a stroke.

Opiates - Euphoria, constricted pupils, lowered blood pressure and heart rate. Enhances sedative effect of both, increasing the risk of overdose.

Source of Information: SAMSHA, DEA, NIDA