

TOWNSHIP OF WYCKOFF - PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL POISONING

Already this past month, the Wyckoff Police Department has been called to a Township home where an underage drinking party was taking place. A local teen was transported to the hospital with alcohol poisoning to obtain medical attention.

Celebrations, hazing and challenges or dares many times involve the abuse of alcoholic beverages, which should never be condoned. These activities, however, commonly encourage young people to consume more alcohol than their bodies can process. The result of consuming 21 shots in an hour to celebrate turning 21 or consuming a full bottle of alcohol on a dare are typical scenarios for causing alcohol poisoning. Until recently, alcohol poisoning was downplayed by colleges as colleges did not want "bad publicity". Information from Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID) estimates that as many as 4,000 deaths occur each year from alcohol overdosing. Many deaths are first time drinkers who have never had alcohol before. However, in the past, Death Certificates listed cardiac arrest or asphyxiation as the cause of death. Medical examiners were hesitant to tell grieving families that the cause of death was too much alcohol. This is changing as organizations are trying to provide information about the dangers of drinking alcohol.

Your friend has had too much to drink and has passed out. Some people may laugh at the behavior of others and often think it's even funnier when someone passes out. How can you tell if they are suffering from alcohol poisoning? If someone is passed out or sleeping and cannot be awakened, this is a serious situation. Several deaths have occurred because friends or family members assumed that the victim would "sleep it off". If a person drinks too much alcohol before falling asleep, the alcohol will shut down breathing and heart functions and can kill a person within a few hours. Even if a person does not die, alcohol overdose can lead to irreversible brain damage.

Some critical signs of alcohol poisoning:

- Mental confusion, stupor
- No response to pinching the skin
- Vomiting while asleep
- Seizures
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness.

Some common myths about alcohol poisoning:

- Drinking coffee will sober the person up.
- Taking a cold shower or bath
- Sleeping it off
- Walking it off

What should you do if you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning?

- Call 911 immediately. Time is critical and a quick response may save a life
- Do not leave the person alone. Continue to try to revive them.
- Turn the person on their side to prevent them from choking if they vomit.
- Monitor their breathing closely. If they stop breathing, have someone begin CPR.
- Tell the Emergency Medical Technicians the symptoms and the amount of alcohol the person has consumed.