

HEALTH

Healing from Grief

Don't suffer in silence, author says



Denise Hall Brown

People often grieve in silence. It is common for people to feel isolated and alone when they mourn. But there is healing in support. Denise Hall Brown saw a need to promote the power of relationships and resources to aid in the healing process, starting with the publication of her first book, *2Grieve 2Gether: A Journal from the Heart Helping Survivors and Supporters Navigate the Healing Process*.

When Brown was 29, her mother was killed by a drunk driver. She lost her 5-month-old

son tragically 10 years later. Since then, she's buried her husband and an aunt who was like a mother-figure to her.

From each hardship, Brown

learned that grief is not something you ever get over, rather you get through. She experienced firsthand the wide range of emotions brought on by the rawness of grief. She has learned to be gentle with herself through each ordeal.

The premise behind *2Grieve 2Gether* is that grief is a process that should not be handled alone. The book is unique in addressing both survivors (those who are dealing with the death of a loved one) and supporters (those who are trying to help them).

Brown attends Hood College in Frederick, Md., where she earned a certificate in thanatology, the study of death and bereavement. She is working toward her master's degree in that field.

Toast to Your Health

For Your Health



BY DR. JAMES N. MARTIN JR.

For many Americans, having a couple of drinks to unwind at the end of the day or to connect socially with friends is a fun and occasional indulgence. But for a growing number of women who drink, these occasions have gone from few-and-far-between to routine.

Drinking too much alcohol can cause a slew of negative physical, social, and mental consequences in women such as decreased fertility, menstrual disorders, heart and liver problems, injuries, seizures, malnutrition, and an increased risk of breast, liver, rectal, and head and neck cancers. Loss of income, child neglect or abuse, altered judgment, driving under the influence, and depression may also occur.

So how much is too much? Moderate drinking is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two per day for men. It's recommended that women drink less because, pound for pound, they have less water in their bodies to help dilute alcohol and its toxic by-products than men, making them more vulnerable to alcohol-related health problems at lower levels of alcohol intake.

Serving size also matters. One drink equals five ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, eight to nine ounces of malt liquor, or 1.5 ounces (one shot glass) of 80-proof spirits. The large drinks commonly served at bars and restaurants can easily pack three or more servings of alcohol, not to mention hundreds of empty calories.

Thirteen percent of women in the U.S. consume more than seven alcoholic drinks each week. More than one-quarter of women aged 18-25 binge drink, meaning they consume more than three drinks per occasion. Binge drinking causes a sudden peak in the blood alcohol, which can lead to unsafe behavior and a higher risk of reproductive and organ damage.

Many of us don't realize that we drink too much. Understanding what a reasonable level of consumption is may be enough to encourage some people to cut back. However, others may find that it is hard to curb their drinking or may not stop drinking even though it threatens their health, safety, or relationships. These are signs of alcohol dependence.

Women are often more reluctant than men to admit that they need help or have an addiction, fearing repercussions at work or with the police, social isolation, or the loss of their children. But the sooner the problem is addressed, the better.

If you think you may have a drinking problem, talk to your doctor. He or she can be an excellent resource for advice and information and can refer you to support groups that can help.

For more information, the Patient Education Pamphlet "Alcohol and Women" is available at acog.org.

Dr. James N. Martin Jr. is president of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



A tattoo artist at work with a customer.

Rare Tattoo Infections Found

(AP) -- At least two men may have come down with a rare bacterial skin infection that is hard to treat with antibiotics after getting tattoos at a store in Seattle, health authorities said last week.

One 44-year-old man was confirmed to have a case of *Mycobacterium haemophilum* after getting a tattoo on his arm in August 2009, the Cen-

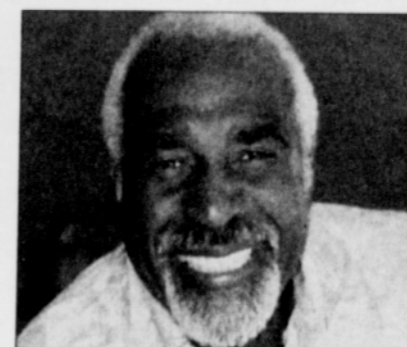
ters for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The infection, which showed up as a bumpy red rash and a pus infection on the skin's surface, resisted treatment with several antibiotics but eventually disappeared after nine months.

A second suspected case was reported in a 35-year-old man who got a tattoo at the

same place two months later, but tests were inconclusive. The CDC said it considered it a "suspected" instance of infection.

The source of the bacteria remains a mystery. Authorities said the tattoo parlor was in compliance with safety regulations but told the owner to use sterilized water for rinsing skin and diluting ink instead of tap water.



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