

Report drunken drivers at toll free number

Keeping Oregonians from being hurt or killed on the state's highways is the purpose of a new program of the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission. If you see a drunk driver, you are urged to report the individual immediately by calling a toll free number, 1-800-452-7888.

The new program called REDDI (Report Every Drunk Driver Immediately) features a 24-hour-a-day toll free number. A call to the REDDI phone puts the caller in touch with the State Police main office in Salem. From there personnel can be alerted from different State Police field stations around the state about the drunk driver.

Governor Vic Atiyeh said Traffic Safety Commission statistics show that over 50 percent of Oregon's traffic fatalities involve alcohol abuse.

"We must get drunk drivers off the highway before more people are hurt or killed," he said. "In the first eight weeks since the number of State Police Officers has been

reduced (due to the cut in the Oregon State Police budget by the state legislature) the number of traffic fatalities has gone up 27 percent over the same period a year ago."

How to report drunk drivers

(Call toll free 1-800-452-7888)

1. Describe drunk driver's vehicle
2. Vehicle license number
3. Location of vehicle
4. Direction vehicle is traveling (You don't have to identify yourself)

How to spot a drunk driver

1. Very fast or slow speed
2. Jerky driving, rocking accelerator
3. Frequent lane changing at high speed
4. Improper passing with not enough clearance; slowing or swerving when passing
5. Overshooting or ignoring traffic control signals
6. Approaching signals too fast or slow; jerky stops and starts
7. Driving at night without lights



Spillyay File photo by Rangila

8. Failure to dim lights to oncoming traffic
9. Driving in lower gears without any reason

10. Driving too close to shoulders or curbs; hugging edge of road or straddling center line.

11. Driving with windows down in cold weather
12. Driving with head out window

Realities of alcoholism shouldn't be ignored

The Illness of Alcoholism

What is alcoholism? Everyone seems to have her or his own definition, but most are fraught with myths and misconceptions that distort the real nature of the illness.

An alcoholic person, according to Mark Kellor of the Rutgers University of Alcohol Studies, is "one who is unable to consistently choose whether he should drink or not, and who, if he drinks, is unable consistently to choose whether

he should stop or not."

Alcoholism has very little to do with when you drink, how long you've been drinking, or even how much alcohol you consume. But it has a great deal to do with how important alcohol is to you in particular situations and how seriously drinking is affecting the basic realities of your life: your health, your emotional well-being, your personal relationships, your work, and your financial situation.

The more drinking is

interfering with these areas of your life, the more serious your alcohol problem.

The Facts

Alcohol use is almost second nature to many segments of society. Perhaps because it is so commonplace, some of us feel threatened by the dangerous, tragic potential of the drug we are using. We don't like to think about alcoholism, and as a result, many of us aren't aware of some important

aspects of the problem. For example:

1. Alcoholism is a treatable illness, as defined by the American Medical Association, the British Medical Association, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. It is no more a sign of weaknesses or moral dissipation than diabetes or German measles. And although some persons with alcohol problems say they feel like they're "going crazy," alcoholism is not a symptom of basic mental instability.

2. As illnesses go, alcoholism is far from uncommon. It is simply that many people—especially women—hide their problem to protect themselves from the irrational social stigma associated with it. With some 10 million Americans suffering from the illness, alcoholism is the nation's number one drug problem.

3. Only about five percent of the alcoholic persons in the United States fit the "skid row" stereotype of the homeless old man on the park bench. Alcoholism affects all economic groups and does not discriminate according to sex, age, or race. More than 70 percent of alcoholic persons hold down steady jobs, are living with their families, and maintain ties with their community.

4. Many alcoholic people start out as social drinkers. A pattern of taking a few drinks "to loosen up" on social occasions is followed by a period of increasingly heavy drinking. Gradually, dependence on alcohol increases until finally, the person can no longer function without it.

Your Health

Alcohol is an addictive, anesthetic drug which may be affecting your health in ways you don't realize. When you drink large doses over long periods of time, you risk damage to your heart, muscles, liver, and digestive system.

Heavy drinking over the years may also result in serious mental disorders or permanent damage to the brain. Your mental functions, including memory, judgement, and learning ability, can deteriorate severely.

Your Family

You may fear outside help partly because of the humiliation you think your family will face—and family members may even strongly oppose treatment for fear of "what the neighbors will think." But consider how much more seriously you are hurting them by not getting help. If you have children, they are likely to suffer particularly painful effects from a drinking problem in the family.

Many women have emerged from an alcoholic blackout to find their children seriously neglected—or even physically abused. Even if no violence occurs, a child who is dependent on an unpredictable, preoccupied, sometimes incoherent parent can't help but suffer extreme anxiety and frustration that may have lasting effects.

Your Baby

If you are of childbearing age, you should also consider the effects heavy drinking may have on unborn children. University of Washington researchers have studied the babies of eight alcoholic mothers and found that all the infants showed physical abnormalities, including small head size, joint problems, heart defects, and low birth weight and size.

None of the children "caught up" when given adequate postnatal care and nutrition. Other studies indicate that many infants of alcoholic mothers suffer withdrawal symptoms at birth.

Reminder: AA and Alanon meetings are on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.

Antabuse can aid alcoholic

Since the introduction in 1948, Antabuse (disulfiram) has been used by thousands of alcoholics both in Europe and North America to keep dry for prolonged periods.

"In effect, Antabuse acts as a positive chemical curtain to protect the alcoholic with a sincere desire to remain sober from taking the 'first' drink which may be the initial step on the road to still another 'bender.'" (D.J. Feldman).

According to Dr. Ruth Fox "a man not on Antabuse who is fighting the urge to drink may have to choose between drinking and not drinking several hundred times a day, while the man on Antabuse makes the decision just once.

Antabuse is one of many aids available to help in the rehabilitation of the chronic alcoholic. Properly used, it helps maintain sobriety so that the patient may be receptive to psychotherapy, regain self-confidence, re-adjust socially and, all in all, is enabled to adopt a life in which alcohol can play no part.

Antabuse alone has no ill effects, though on first taking it, some minor side effects may be experienced, such as drowsiness, headache, fatigue, gastrointestinal symptoms and halitosis (metallic or garlic-like aftertaste). These will disappear as the system adjusts

to the medication. These unpleasant side effects and severe alcohol-Antabuse reactions are rare with the low dosage usually now used (500 mg. first week then 250 mg. as maintenance dosage).

It is considered inadvisable for a person with heart damage or with severe high blood pressure to take Antabuse because of the possible damaging effects of an alcohol-Antabuse reaction. Persons with severely damaged livers are also not good subjects for Antabuse therapy.

A patient who takes this drug regularly and takes a drink will quickly experience a flushing of face (even extending down over the neck and chest), a pounding headache, palpitations, nausea and sometimes violent vomiting. These effects are due to the accumulation of acetaldehyde in the blood from the delayed metabolism of the ingested alcohol.

The severity of the reaction and duration, which will occur even several days after stopping Antabuse, is essentially proportional to the amount of alcohol ingested. A person should not take Antabuse until at least 24 hours has elapsed since the last drink. Conversely, the person who decides to drink should wait at least ten days after last Antabuse before drinking to be

reasonably safe from having an Antabuse alcohol reaction.

While extremely uncomfortable, these effects are seldom dangerous in the sense of causing permanent damage or death. Care should be taken particularly by family and others not to give the person on Antabuse alcohol without his or her knowledge or conversely the drug without his or her knowledge. It is possible for a person to be accidentally injured while in an alcohol-Antabuse reaction, for example, in an auto accident while driving or as a pedestrian.

The responsibility for the daily does is with the patient; thus they alone decide to actively support their decision to stop drinking. Important here is the conscious wish of many alcoholics to stay sober. Antabuse is not an answer, but a "chemical fence," and its ideal use is with regular counseling.

Antabuse helps the patient arrive at a stage of coping with feelings he may not have identified consciously or could not express. It gives him time to re-organize his life with the help of A.A., therapy, church, or other sources of help.

It is recommended that every person taking Antabuse regularly carry an identification card stating the fact and the seriousness of his condition if found ill, warning against the use of alcohol.