

Substance Use & The Brain



This newsletter is published by the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Education & Prevention Coordinator from Saskatchewan North ABI Services.

Impairment behind the wheel is most often associated with alcohol, but can also include drugs such as illegal substances, prescription medications and over-the-counter remedies.

The Science of Impairment

Drugs and alcohol are chemicals that affect the brain's message system and interfere with the way neurons (brain cells) normally send, receive, and process information. Ultimately, they slow everything down in the body. This can be anything from a delay in our thought processes and concentration; to a slower reaction time and poor muscle coordination.



While impaired our brain still thinks every thing is happening normally. This false sense of the brain and body working normally tends to result in risky choices. This is why it is important to make a plan to get home safe before drinking or using drugs. Please plan a safe way home if you are out, most importantly please plan to use responsibly & STAY SAFE.

Overdose of any substance automatically triggers the brain to try to protect itself.

Do you know the signs of overdose?

- ★ Vomiting
- ★ Unresponsive, but awake
- ★ Eye pupils look small
- ★ Pale and/or clammy face
- ★ Blue fingernails or lips
- ★ Shallow or erratic breathing, or not breathing at all
- ★ Slow or erratic pulse (heartbeat)
- ★ Choking or sounds of a gurgling noise
- ★ Loss of consciousness

The Recovery Position

If you suspect overdose, **call 911** and be prepared to use your First Aid/CPR skills.

