

## Alcohol's Impact on Athletes

Athletes work very hard on their performance! To fully reap the benefits of training, it is important for athletes to be mindful of what they put into their bodies.

**Alcohol is a performance-impairing drug. Athletes who drink alcohol are TWICE as likely to be injured.**

### **Many athletes underestimate the impact of alcohol on their bodies and how long that impact lasts.**

#### **Common impacts of alcohol on the body include:**

- **Slows** reaction time up to 72 hours
- **Inhibits** the brain's ability to learn and store new information
- **Decreases** hand-eye coordination
- **Disrupts** sleep and attention
- **Increases** fat storage
- **Weakens** the immune system

#### **Alcohol use also specifically affects the bodies of athletes in the following ways:**

- **Impairs** muscle growth
- **Dehydrates** the body
- **Inhibits** absorption of nutrients
- **Prevents** muscle recovery
- **Depletes** energy and negatively impacts endurance
- **Impairs** heat regulation

#### **Choosing NOT to drink alcohol will enable athletes to eliminate the longer term negative impacts alcohol has on their bodies. Additionally, this decision will also make the following less likely:**

- Injuries
- Unsafe choices, such as getting in a car with an impaired driver
- Poor academic performance
- Loss of scholarships
- Depression
- Other high-risk behaviors

**Athletes can boost their team's success during competitions by refraining from drinking in-season, and they can enhance their strength and performance in the off-season by avoiding alcohol.**

**If you are an athlete, make the healthy choice of staying alcohol-free. It will make a big difference!**