



THE CONNECTION

IOWA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

ISSUE 1, SEPTEMBER 5, 2013 - VAPORIZING ALCOHOL

WELCOME FROM DIRECTOR LUKAN

Thanks for taking a few minutes to read the first installment of our new newsletter, *The Connection*. I hope you find the information useful and pass it along to others who may have interest.

Several years ago, the Rozga family received the worst news any family can receive—one of their children had died. The real tragedy of the situation is that the death of David Rozga might have been prevented with education on the dangerous effects of synthetic drugs. Before anyone knew they were a threat in the community, David experimented with a dangerous new brand of drug on the street, K2, and it ultimately resulted in his death.

Our goal with *The Connection* is to educate parents, family members, community leaders and teachers about the most current trend in drug abuse and emerging threats we face in Iowa.

The first step to winning any battle is knowing your enemy. We hope to share basic knowledge about the appearance and effects of drugs that may be affecting your community and your family, so that you will know it when you see it and learn how to fight it.

We will provide links to resources such as the Iowa Department of Public Health's Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center (ISAIC) where families can turn to find help,

and hope to serve as an information gathering and sharing platform so that you can communicate with us about trends or emerging threats you see in your local community.

Working together, we can win the battle against drug abuse. Thanks for all you do to make Iowa a safer, more productive state free of drug abuse.

Sincerely,

Steven F. Lukan

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Welcome from Director Lukan*
- *Vaporizing Alcohol*
- *Guidelines and Identifiers for Alcohol Poisoning*
- *Alcohol Poisoning Signs*

HELPFUL LINKS:

- *Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center*
www.drugfreeinfo.org
- *Office of Drug Control Policy*
www.iowa.gov/odcp
- *Partnership @ Drug Free Iowa.org*
www.drugfreeiowa.org
- *Iowa Poison Control Center*
www.iowapoinson.org

VAPORIZING (SMOKING) ALCOHOL

Smoking alcohol has increased dramatically in both the high school and college student population. Unlike drinking alcohol, where both vomiting and liver action play a role in detoxification, this form of alcohol intake can quickly trigger a medical emergency and lead to death.

Several different processes are used to release the alcohol from any alcoholic beverage. Detailed instructions on the internet teach a viewer how

to smoke or vaporize alcohol. All methods are efficient and cause almost instantaneous effects. Instead of waiting 20 minutes for a buzz from ingesting alcohol, there is a large degree of intoxication and impairment very quickly after it is inhaled.

The danger of smoking alcohol is related to the rapid absorption of alcohol into the blood stream and its effects on the brain. When a person

binge drinks too quickly the result is nausea and vomiting. In addition, when alcohol is absorbed from the intestines it makes a direct route through the liver assisting in the detoxification. This often prevents alcohol poisoning.

But, when alcohol vapors are inhaled these protective processes do not occur. Instead, large amounts of alcohol can enter the blood

stream move directly to the brain and cause alcohol poisoning (toxicity).

Source: *Central Florida Intelligence Exchange Bulletin*



GUIDELINES & INDICATORS FOR ALCOHOL POISONING

These people are at risk of dying.

Alcohol poisoning is NOT the same as being drunk. Here are some important guidelines and identifiers:

In case of emergency, call 911.

Guidelines:

If you have questions about a person with alcohol poisoning or who is intoxicated, call the Iowa Poison Control Center.

By calling **800-222-1222** you will be routed to your local poison control center. They will advise if a person needs to go to the hospital for treatment.

Don't leave an unconscious person alone. Alcohol poisoning affects the way your gag reflex works. An unconscious person may choke on his or her own vomit and accidentally inhale (aspirate) vomit into the lungs, which could cause death.

Identifiers:

Glassware with a match or candle burning under it and alcohol products in the vicinity with a distinct smell of alcohol in the air or in the bottle.

Dry ice with alcohol products in the same area may also be found.

A bicycle pump hooked to a cork that fits inside of a plastic two liter bottle.

ALCOHOL POISONING SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Because alcohol depresses normal body functions the symptoms can include:

- Confusion, stupor
- Seizures
- Slow breathing (less than eight breaths a minute)
- Irregular breathing (a gap of more than 10 seconds between breaths)
- Blue tinged or pale skin
- Low body temperature
- Unconsciousness (can't be awakened)
- Vomiting and inhaling the vomit because of a lack of gag reflex



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