

THE STALL SEAT JOURNAL

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Overloads may be OVERRATED

I'm not feeling it.... I'm not feeling it.... I'm not feeling it.... O-o-o-o-o-o...OMG...Where am I? JUST A LITTLE TOO MUCH TOO FAST

If you've seen this party scenario — or maybe *been* this scenario — you know alcohol overloads are overrated.

Sometimes all it takes is a good night's sleep next to your BPF (Best Porcelain Friend) to solve the problem, but other times it might take a paramedic. Occasionally, it results in a hearse (visit www.Gordie.org for many very sad stories).

Alcohol overload (aka alcohol poisoning or alcohol overdose) is often portrayed as ubiquitous and harmless fun in Animal-House-derivative movies. But getting (over)loaded is not fun, not harmless and not even typical.

Too much too fast leads to embarrassment and mess at best. At worst, an overloaded person can land in medical and/or legal trouble.

Factors that determine how many drinks constitute an overload include size of drink(s), body size of the drinker, speed of drinking, and the drinker's genetic ability to make alcohol-detoxifying liver enzymes.

Size of drinks: The standard is 12 oz. of beer, 4.5 oz. of wine, 1 oz. of 100-proof liquor, or ½ oz. of "grain" alcohol or Everclear.

The difficulty often is in the measurement — using a tumbler for a wine glass maybe or guess-timating an ounce, which is equal to only two tiny tablespoons.

Size and gender of drinker: A 200-pound man can drink more than a 100-pound woman before his or her Blood Alcohol Content is over the legal limit of 0.08.



Speed of drinking: On average (and by no means does average mean typical), the human body can process 1 to 1.5 ounces of alcohol per hour.

Genetics: The bodies of some people make more detoxifying enzymes than others.

Signs of High BAC and Overload

An alcohol overload is typically measured by BAC or "Blood Alcohol Content," which shows up on breathalyzer tests, often given to drivers suspected of drinking. If one's BAC is high, it shows:

- slurred speech
- difficulty walking or standing
- erratic behavior
- inability to make eye contact
- can't keep up a conversation (or sounds confused)
- prolonged vomiting

A person with these signs who continues to drink may be headed for alcohol poisoning. The signs of this stage are loss of consciousness, uncontrollable vomiting, possible seizures, cold or blueish skin. If you see someone with these symptoms,

take action.

1. Roll your inebriated friend or acquaintance into the Recovery Position (see picture), to prevent choking on vomit.

2. Dial 9-1-1 and ask for medical assistance.

3. Do not leave the person alone.

How about you?

To examine your relationship with alcohol and see how you compare with other VCU students, take the free and anonymous Online Alcohol Assessment at www.myonlinesurveys.com/vcu (use the access code "vcuams").

If you or a friend is taking risks with alcohol use, or if you are concerned about your drinking behaviors, please contact Camille Adams at VCU Counseling Services, 828-6200.



The Recovery Position

VCU Students Weigh In

Most VCU students know what it takes to avoid overloads. Our research shows that 68 percent of undergraduate students and 83 percent of graduate students kept their Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) below the legal 0.08 limit the last time they partied.*

In fact, about 25 percent of VCU students never have to worry about overloading, because they don't drink alcohol at all. So, if you are a total non-drinker, you have plenty of company when you step up and say something to a clueless drinker who takes "uninformed" risks.

*Random sample of VCU students, spring 2008, n=1,841 National College Health Assessment

Same great services, same friendly faces! **NEW** name, **NEW** spaces!

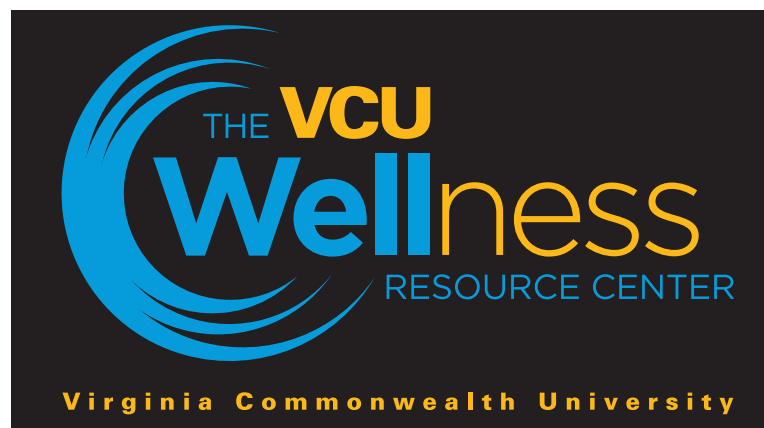
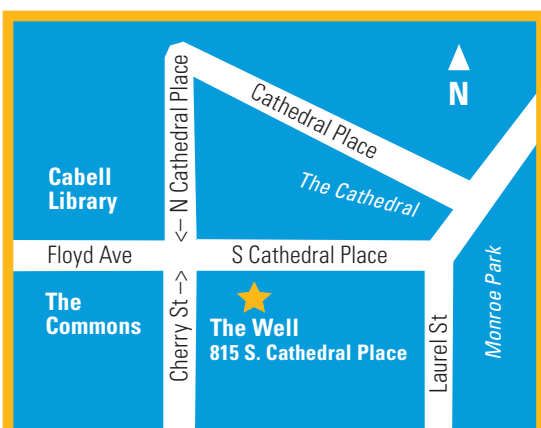
You may remember us as the Office of Health Promotion (OHP), but this summer we got a HUGE makeover! Our NEW name is **Wellness Resource Center**, (aka **The Well**), and we'll be located at the center of the Monroe Park campus.

We hope you'll pop in and visit us at 815 S. Cathedral Place, which is near the intersection of Floyd and Cherry near the University Student Commons.

With a new **expanded** Resource Center, we can offer students information and services on the following topics:

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Nutrition, disordered eating, body image
- Sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking
- Sexual health
- Stress management
- Tobacco cessation
- Volunteer opportunities (peer health education groups)
- Guidance on public health graduate programs & careers
- Student internships

Stay tuned for our **Grand Opening** celebrations or give us a ring at 804-VCU-WELL.



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804-828-WELL
www.students.vcu.edu/health



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