**What is “BAC”?**

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the percentage of alcohol in the blood. A BAC of 0.10 means that 0.10% (one tenth of one percent) of a person’s blood is alcohol.

**What is a Standard Drink?**

1 Standard Drink = 0.6 fluid oz. of 100% alcohol

Alcohol percentage and container volume will determine number of standard drinks.

### Absorption

Many factors impact how quickly alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream, including factors that can vary from day to day (illness, lack of sleep, food in stomach, medication, etc.).

### Tips for a lower BAC

- **Pare and space** - Sipping a drink instead of chugging it, alternating alcoholic beverages with water or soda, and having no more than 1 drink per hour all give the body time to process the alcohol.
- **Eat before and while drinking** - Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream more slowly when there is food (especially protein) in the stomach.
- **Avoid mixing alcohol with other drugs** - Some prescription, over-the-counter, and illicit drugs (e.g., antihistamines and narcotics) can increase alcohol’s effects. Caffeine and other stimulants can trick people into feeling less impaired, which could lead to dangerous choices.
- **Use caution when sick or tired** - Alcohol leaves the body more slowly when a person is sleep deprived or ill.
- **Be aware of the environment** - Alcohol can cause greater impairment when a person is sleep deprived or ill.

### Why are there different charts for men and women?

If a man and a woman of the same height and weight consume the same amount of alcohol over the same period of time, the woman will have a higher BAC.

### Use Protective Behaviors

- **93% of UVa students** want their friends to tell them if they’ve had too much to drink.
- **86% of UVa students** who drink use the buddy system.
- **94% of UVa students** eat before and/or while drinking.

### Safer Drinking Guidelines

- **0 drinks** is the only safe choice for people in certain higher-risk situations—for example when driving, pregnant, or taking certain prescription or over-the-counter medications or with health conditions such as alcoholism. Consuming alcohol under the age of 21 can lead to legal consequences.
- **Women’s guidelines**
  - No more than 1 drink per hour.
  - On average, it takes nearly three hours for most people to eliminate the alcohol in 2 standard drinks.
  - No more than 2 drinks on any one day.
  - No more than 7 drinks per week.

- **Men’s guidelines**
  - No more than 2 drinks on any one day.
  - No more than 14 drinks per week.

*From the 2013 Spring Health Survey, with responses from 654 UVa students. Design by Emily Cleveland, Class of 2013, Adapted by Sara Neel, Class of 2015