

Re: "Hangovers of Hamilton" (July 4, 2005)

The City of Hamilton's Public Health & Community Services would like to take this opportunity to remind readers about the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in light of the recent article in the Spectator about purported hangover cures, "Hangovers of Hamilton". Excessive alcohol use can have very negative effects, not only on the individual consuming the alcohol, but others as well. Having more than two drinks a day increases the likelihood of injuries due to falls, car crashes and violence. A day of heavy drinking can also increase blood pressure and the risk of stroke.

The volume of alcohol reported to have been consumed by all eight individuals profiled in this article greatly exceeds the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines which recommend no more than two drinks on any one day and no more than nine drinks per week for women and fourteen for men. Having five or more drinks on one occasion is defined as binge drinking which is associated with increased risk of injury, alcohol poisoning, impaired judgment and death. The article glamorized heavy drinking and made no mention of the serious health and social problems which can occur as the result of excessive drinking.

Tips for following the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines include:

- Knowing what a standard drink is
- Keeping track of how much you drink – daily and weekly
- Never drinking and driving
- Not drinking for health reasons. To keep your heart healthy, eat better, exercise more and don't smoke
- Talking to your kids about alcohol

Summer is a time when alcohol consumption rates rise and unfortunately, so do the rates of alcohol-related injuries and deaths. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage responsible use of alcohol and hope that the Hamilton Spectator does the same in future articles.

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