

Getting Back to ZERO: A Conversation Starter

Compared with how quickly your body can absorb alcohol, the rate of metabolism is very constant.

- The liver can only metabolize alcohol at a rate of 0.016% per hour. The rate of metabolism can be thought of as the speed at which a person “sobers up.”
- There is no way to speed up the “sobering up” process. This includes vomiting.
- Coffee, water, exercise, etc., might cause a shock to the system, but it won’t impact your blood alcohol level.

Studies have shown, drinks poured by students are typically stronger than standard drinks.

- This means you are consuming more alcohol than you think and your BAC rises quickly.
- The sobering-up process takes much longer than you realize.

Let’s first get on the same page. **What is a standard drink?**

A standard drink is any beverage that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of ethyl alcohol.

- ✓ 12 ounces of beer
- ✓ 4 ounces of wine
- ✓ 1.25 ounces of 80 proof hard alcohol (40% alcohol by volume)

You can consume a dangerous amount of alcohol while thinking it was only “a few drinks.”

Many things will go into determining an individual’s BAC. **Can you name the five main factors?**

- Strength of the drink
- Amount you’ve consumed
- Time period over which you’ve been drinking
- Weight
- Gender

Though many factors will go into what it takes for two individuals to reach a certain BAC, once they do, the amount of time needed to get back to ZERO will pretty much be the same.

.08% BAC will take you 5 hours to get back to 0.0%

.16% BAC will take you 10 hours to get back to 0.0%

GETTING BACK TO 0.00% FROM 0.08%

Q: How long does it take?
A: 5 hours

0.080% [minus 0.016%]
0.064% [minus 0.016%]
0.048% [minus 0.016%]
0.032% [minus 0.016%]
0.016% [minus 0.016%]
0.00%

#ASTPZTA

GETTING BACK TO 0.00% FROM 0.16%

Q: How long does it take?
A: 10 hours

0.160% [minus 0.016%] 0.064% [minus 0.016%]
0.144% [minus 0.016%] 0.048% [minus 0.016%]
0.128% [minus 0.016%] 0.032% [minus 0.016%]
0.112% [minus 0.016%] 0.016% [minus 0.016%]
0.096% [minus 0.016%] 0.00%

#ASTPZTA

With a BAC of 0.24%, it takes 15 hours to get back to 0.0%.

- **What is surprising about this?**

The poster illustrates what it actually look likes:

- Going to sleep at 2:00 a.m. with a BAC of 0.24% doesn't mean you'll wake up sober.
- It's tough to make the grade when you're still drunk (0.144%) at your 8:00 a.m. class.
- Your morning drive to work or an internship at 10:00 a.m. means you're driving impaired (0.112%).
- Alcohol will still be in your system (0.048%) at 2:00 p.m. during an advisor meeting.
- By dinner time at 5:00 p.m. your BAC will be back to 0.0%.



- **Which of these is most concerning to you?**
- **What are other examples of when what you've consumed can be an issue at:**
 - 0.08%?
 - 0.16%?
 - 0.24%?

Tips for moderating your drinking

What can you do to make drinking a fun, yet safe, experience?

- ✓ Set your drinking limit before a social drinking occasion.
- ✓ Keep track of how much you drink.
- ✓ Space your drinks.
- ✓ When drinking mixed drinks, only accept drinks made by a bartender.
- ✓ Do not do shots.
- ✓ Alternate alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic beverages.
- ✓ Drink for quality, not quantity.
- ✓ Avoid drinking games.
- ✓ Learn drink refusal skills.
- ✓ Find other things to do.
- ✓ Don't accept a drink if you don't know what is in it.

Any steps toward reduced risk are steps in the right direction.