

What Happens To Your Body At Different BACs (Blood Alcohol Concentration)?

by Evolve Indy | Dec 27, 2022 | Blog



Understanding how your body reacts to alcohol, and the dangers involved in drinking, is a key element of alcohol treatment. However, few people understand the science behind the way drinking gets into your system. In the interest of providing accurate information surrounding blood alcohol concentration, let's break it down into simple terms.



Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Explained

Blood alcohol concentration, or BAC, is the level of alcohol present in a person's bloodstream. The level indicates grams of Ethanol for every 100g of blood. To put this into perspective, on average humans have around 5000g of blood in their body. This means a BAC of 0.10% could be very dangerous.

At an addiction treatment center, going through the effects of a high BAC (especially on a regular basis) can help a patient to understand the consequences of their behavior. Going through an intensive outpatient course with these levels in mind is incredibly beneficial for long term treatment.

Your Body and Different BAC Levels

BAC levels will vary depending on how much you drink and how long for. Let's go through the most significant levels:

0.02%: Commonly known as being 'tipsy', this level is where people first start noticing alcohol affecting them.

0.05%: This BAC level can cause blurred vision and slightly slurred speech, and is most commonly recognised as 'drunk'.

0.08%: Your senses will be heavily impaired at this level. As such, driving when experiencing a BAC higher than this is illegal.

0.10%: A BAC at this level will cause slow thinking and speaking and precarious balance in many people.

0.15%: This is known as a high BAC. This can cause involuntary movements and unstable balance.

0.2 – 0.3%: At this BAC, you could become confused and unaware of things going on around you. This could mean you make decisions you're not able to consent for, as well as hurt yourself without realizing. This level of alcohol in the blood could lead to partial hospitalization at an alcohol rehab.

0.3 – 0.4%: This BAC could cause you to pass out for long periods, and also experience a fatal cause of alcohol poisoning. Your blood pressure and heart rate could also change rapidly.

Over 0.4%: This is the most dangerous alcohol level which commonly results in a coma. Similarly, a person with this BAC is at extremely high risk of their heart and/or respiratory system stopping.



How a High BAC Could Affect You

A high BAC could cause a person to slur their speech, be unable to see as clearly as usual, experience blackouts and fugue periods, throw up, and eventually pass out altogether. Drinking alcohol on a regular basis can affect the severity of the symptoms witnessed at these levels, which is a common issue that needs exploring throughout an outpatient program. A high BAC listed above could be subtler, or go unnoticed, resulting in a risky and potentially fatal result for the person under the influence.

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