


BMMC Rider Training

Drinking And Riding

Good Idea or bad?

Scene - Emergency Room with a banged up, drunken biker being tended to by the doctor.



BIKER (still a little groggy): What's the big deal? I can handle a couple of beers then ride home. 

DOC (stitching him up): Well, let's talk about a few things first and then I'll bet *you* a beer you'll know more, and make the right decision.

BIKER: You're on!

DOC: First, you need to know what physically happens to you when you drink a beer. About 20% of the alcohol is absorbed in the stomach, and the rest is absorbed by the small intestine.

Now, how fast it's absorbed depends on several things like how concentrated the alcohol is, the type of drink (carbonated speeds it up) and whether or not your stomach is full (food slows it down).

BIKER: The bars usually have snacks at Happy Hour, so that helps, right?

DOC: That helps but it just slows the absorption process.

DOC: To make it as simple as I can... alcohol metabolizes much faster than food does, so almost immediately, the alcohol passes through the stomach wall and mixes with the water in the blood stream. Are you still with me?

BIKER: Yeah (yawning).

DOC: Well, you know your blood travels all over your body, keeping your tissues hydrated as the water in the blood stream nourishes them. The problem here is that the alcohol is dissolved in the water and enters the tissues, too.

BIKER: So? BFD.

DOC: It *is* a big deal because the tissues are throughout your body, meaning the alcohol is being absorbed into them in record time. Actually, alcohol reaches your brain within a minute of when you took your first sip.

BIKER: Is that why I can start to feel a 'buzz' shortly after chugging my first beer?

DOC: Yep, you got it. And that's why it's always recommended to eat when you drink.



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BIKER: Well, how come my little woman gets tipsy much faster than I do, and she's an accomplished drinker?

DOC: That's because you, being a man, tend to have more muscle tissue and less fat cells than your little woman has. And because muscle has more water content than fat does, the alcohol content will be more diluted in you and more concentrated in her.

BIKER: No s*#t! (perking up).

DOC: Did you ever notice that the more beer you drink the more you seem to change? By that I mean you might first start feeling pretty good, maybe a bit more confident, maybe feel a little flushed?

BIKER: Yeah, I've seen that happen to other people as they try to catch up to where m'little woman and I are.

DOC: When you feel like that you and your buddies are probably already at the legal limit of .08 on the Breathalyzer.

BIKER: Ah, come on, DOC. I feel like that after mebbe two beers. Can't I get rid of the alcohol by hitting the head a lot? I always have to pee.



DOC (finishing up the first set of stitches): Well, yes and no. You purge the alcohol from your body in three ways. Your kidneys eliminate about 5%, your lungs exhale about 5%, and your liver chemically breaks down the rest into acid. Ever hear of cirrhosis of the liver?

BIKER: Yeah, my old man died of that, but he was an alcoholic.

DOC: Sorry to hear that. True, cirrhosis usually occurs in the chronic drinker, the alcoholic. You might want to watch out for that.

BIKER: Thanks.

DOC: A good Rule of Thumb you can use is that an average person can eliminate 0.5 oz. of alcohol per hour. So, it would take you approximately one hour to eliminate the alcohol from a 12 oz. can of beer.

What that really means to you is that your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) will rise fairly fast the more you drink. In other words, because you can only get rid of 0.5 oz. of alcohol an hour, the more you drink in that hour the more concentrated the alcohol becomes in your blood. You still with me?

BIKER (starting to glaze over again): What you're saying is don't drink too much too fast, right?



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DOC (finishing up): So far, so good. But what I really want you to know is the more you drink the more your motor skills, your balance, your decision making, and your reaction times deteriorate. And the more confused you become. Not exactly your "A" game for riding a motorcycle.

BIKER: (getting down off the hospital bed) Hmmm.

DOC: Every notice the more you drink the more your sexual behavior increases? (acknowledging the BIKER's nod) Then your performance declines? A couple of more beers and you may not even be able to get aroused.

BIKER: Oh, yeah. (a bit sheepishly) So, does this mean I can't even stop for a beer or two with m'little woman and some friends?

DOC: No, that's not it at all. Sure you can stop but good sense and judgment would dictate that you stay long enough for the effects of the alcohol to wear off. Remember it takes an hour to expel the alcohol from just one beer. If you think you might not want to wait that long, maybe call a cab or get a ride home with one of your more sober friends.

BIKER: OK, OK, Uncle... I give. But let me get this straight...

- After I take a drink of my beer the alcohol gets into my bloodstream almost immediately through the walls of my stomach.
- It travels dissolved in my blood and then enters the water inside each tissue of my body (except the fat-cells, alcohol cannot dissolve in fat).
- The alcohol reaches my brain in about a minute and begins my 'buzz'.
- The more beers I have, the more my motor skill and reaction time degrade... and the more dopey I get. And, I don't think I want to be that fallin' down drunk.
- It takes about an hour to get rid of about 0.5 oz. of alcohol, that's only one beer.
- If a cop stops me and my BAC is .08 or higher on the Breathalyzer, I go to jail.
- If I run into a ditch again because I was too slow in mastering the turn, I get to see you again.

DOC: That's about the size of it... if you're lucky.

BIKER: Well, I guess I owe *you* a beer.



DOC: True. Oh, one other thing I forgot to mention... alcohol equivalents. This means that a standard glass of wine (5 oz. glass), a 12 oz. bottle of beer and a shot of whiskey (1.25 oz. of 80 proof) all contain the equivalent amounts of alcohol and are the same to a Breathalyzer. Kind of dispels that old rumor that "liquor is quicker", huh?.

Now go get your little woman, I need to sew her up, too.



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BAC - Blood Alcohol Concentration (as a Percent): All states (and Canada, too) have passed a 0.08 BAC per se law. These charts produce estimations and should **NOT** be used to determine if someone should drive/ride or not after drinking.

| Men: Blood Alcohol Content Levels | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Approximate Blood Alcohol Percentage | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drinks | Body Weight in Pounds | | | | | | | | | |
| | 100 | 120 | 140 | 160 | 180 | 200 | 220 | 240 | | |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Only Safe Driving Limit |
| 1 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | Driving Skills Significantly Affected |
| 2 | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | Possible Criminal Penalties |
| 3 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | |
| 4 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.06 | |
| 5 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.08 | Legally Intoxicated |
| 6 | 0.23 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.11 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.09 | |
| 7 | 0.26 | 0.22 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.11 | Criminal Penalties |
| 8 | 0.3 | 0.25 | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.13 | |
| 9 | 0.34 | 0.28 | 0.24 | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.14 | |
| 10 | 0.38 | 0.31 | 0.27 | 0.23 | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.16 | 0.16 | Death Possible |

Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.
One drink is 1.25 oz. of 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. of beer, or 5 oz. of table wine.

| Women: Blood Alcohol Content Levels | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Approximate Blood Alcohol Percentage | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drinks | Body Weight in Pounds | | | | | | | | | |
| | 90 | 100 | 120 | 140 | 160 | 180 | 200 | 220 | | 240 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Only Safe Driving Limit |
| 1 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | Driving Skills Significantly Affected |
| 2 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.04 | Possible Criminal Penalties |
| 3 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.11 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.06 | |
| 4 | 0.2 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.13 | 0.11 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.08 | |
| 5 | 0.25 | 0.23 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.11 | 0.1 | 0.09 | Legally Intoxicated |
| 6 | 0.3 | 0.27 | 0.23 | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.11 | |
| 7 | 0.35 | 0.32 | 0.27 | 0.23 | 0.2 | 0.18 | 0.16 | 0.14 | 0.13 | Criminal Penalties |
| 8 | 0.4 | 0.36 | 0.3 | 0.26 | 0.23 | 0.2 | 0.18 | 0.17 | 0.15 | |
| 9 | 0.45 | 0.41 | 0.34 | 0.29 | 0.26 | 0.23 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.17 | |
| 10 | 0.51 | 0.45 | 0.38 | 0.32 | 0.28 | 0.25 | 0.23 | 0.21 | 0.19 | Death Possible |

Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.
One drink is 1.25 oz. of 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. of beer, or 5 oz. of table wine.

Remember, BMMC has a zero tolerance toward consumption of alcohol on a sanctioned ride.

Hope this helps.