New York Pre-Licensing Course

Module Review: Risks of Alcohol and Other Drugs

In this module, you learned the definitions of alcohol and drugs. You discovered the difference between physical and physiological symptoms and identified the effects of various types of drugs. You should now be able to recognize a standard drink as well as define and calculate blood alcohol content. You can now list some of the reasons people cite for driving while under the influence of alcohol and explain the flaws in those arguments.

Some important takeaways from this module include:

- Alcohol is a mind-altering depressant drug commonly found in beverages such as beer, wine, and distilled spirits.
- A drug is a substance that produces a physiological effect when it is introduced into the body. Drugs come in various forms and are categorized into different classes depending on how they affect the body.
- The effects of alcohol and other drugs may be physical—affecting the body, itself—and physiological—affecting all of the body's functions and systems.
- Common physical and physiological effects of alcohol include impaired vision, lengthened reaction times, impaired judgment, decreased attention to details, increased risk-taking behavior, reduced inhibitions, dizziness, and drowsiness and fatigue.
- Common over-the-counter and prescription medications may impair driving ability in ways that are similar to the effects of illegal substances. Always discuss side effects with your doctor or pharmacist and read warning labels before deciding whether it is safe to use a specific medication while driving.
- Synergism or potentiation refers to the unpredictable effects caused by combining any two drugs.
- Blood alcohol content (BAC) is the percentage of alcohol in a person's bloodstream. Chemical tests of breath, saliva, blood, or urine can be used to accurately measure BAC.
- Although personal characteristics such as weight and age as well as factors such as how much food a person has eaten before or while drinking can affect how quickly

alcohol reaches the bloodstream, everyone metabolizes (burns off) alcohol at a similar rate.

- You can roughly estimate a person's BAC based on the person's weight and the number of drinks consumed in a certain amount of time.