

## Why Is HIV a Risk?

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

## Understanding the Risk of HIV with Drug and Alcohol Use

When your brain is on drugs, it has a hard time making appropriate judgments. This judgment impairment is what ultimately leads to HIV, among other things. With HIV, the risk is from the less frequent use of a condom during intercourse. When you go to a party or anywhere else that you may drink alcohol or do drugs, have someone along with you. This person should be making sure that you're making good decisions, so you both should monitor your drug and alcohol intake to make sure that you can still monitor each other. Preferably, someone should be completely sober and this needs to be the case if someone in your party is driving. Try going to a place where there are a variety of things to do instead of drinking such as pool, darts, etc. so that someone who can't drink is able to still have fun with everyone else.

## DRUG and ALCOHOL USE– a significant risk factor for HIV

A third of the 1.2 million Americans with HIV currently use drugs or binge on alcohol. Contrary to popular belief, it is not the sharing of contaminated injection equipment that primarily links drug use to the HIV epidemic. Rather, drug as well as alcohol use can impair judgment and lead to risky sexual behavior and HIV transmission. This is why substance abuse treatment can play an important role in preventing the spread of HIV.

