**The damage after drinking...**

**After you drink:** You are dehydrated. Your brain should fill your skull to the top of your dura (like in the photo), but when you are dehydrated there is space between your dura and your brain! This is the cause of that headache! **Hangover?** Dehydration is not your only problem. Other hangover signs of dizziness, vomiting, shaky muscles, sweating and irritability reduce your ability to function. Increases in calcium during **alcohol withdrawal** flood your brain, which can lead to degeneration of neurons (loss of structure & function) and even neuron death!

**Increased anxiety** in the next few days is due to decreased GABA production. You overused your circuits while drinking, and now you and your GABA production withdraw! This leads to inattention, problems planning, and issues with working memory!

**Binge Drinking:** Considered when a person consumes more than 5 drinks during any one time. Your liver cannot handle this high amount of toxins, which result in liver damage, and over the long term, liver failure. **Want to grab Tylenol?** Think again! It is even harder for your liver to process the toxins in painkillers because your brain and body aren’t working properly. **Grab Advil instead?** Stomach bleeding and irritation in the stomach lining are side effects of alcohol with Ibuprofen! Plus, possible tearing in the stomach lining can occur if taken on an empty stomach! Better to suffer through the damage you’ve done then to make your body worse, or create new damage!

**Long term effects:** Alcohol decreases working memory ability, and studies show less neural activity overall in frontal and parietal brain regions. Plus, you’re at risk for memory dysfunction in your later years: affecting abstract thinking, language (verbal skills and vocabulary), altered perceptions of spatial information and memory for previously learned information. **Liver damage?** Alcohol not only affects the liver, but also your lungs, pancreas, kidneys, endocrine, immune and cardiovascular systems.

**Excessive drinking impacts students due to missed classes, failures of attention, decreases in ability to remember information, and overall brain dysfunction.**

*If you think about drinking, think about your brain first!*


Created by: Jennifer Lechak, Ph.D.