# Inhaling Your Cocktail

The buzz about the dangerous “smoking alcohol” trend

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Although there aren’t any official studies yet about the health outcomes of inhaling liquor fumes, a recent spate of online videos showing the practice rang alarm bells loud enough for doctors to become concerned.

The reason for docs to sound off is simple science: Sniffing alcohol fast-tracks the chemicals into the lungs and from there the brain. The result? A quick high that can easily become addictive, or lead to potentially deadly alcohol poisoning.

When alcohol fumes are inhaled—after the liquid is heated over a flame—the liquor bypasses the stomach and liver, which means the body has no chance to metabolize and excrete the alcohol. This dangerous practice can also dry out nasal passages and the mouth and make people more susceptible to infections, experts say.

Partygoers who literally inhale their drinks might think they are saving calories or skipping the hangover, but “smoking alcohol” does not bypass all the dangers associated with drinking alcohol. Ingesting liquor in any form can impair your decision-making ability, put you at risk of arrest for possession if you’re too young to drink and also if you drive while intoxicated.

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