

# When is enough really enough?

## CHRONICLE REPORTER

KNOWING when to stop is the answer.

The festive season is upon us, and with it, comes the celebrations. So the question posed is at what stage should you throw in the towel, or rather throw out the drink, and say, 'I have had enough'?

Forensic pathologist, Dr Izak Loftus, a member of the National Pathology Group describes the effect of alcohol as 'a tidal wave washing over the brain', thus suppressing the normal functions of the brain.

According to Loftus there are six stages of intoxication:

### □Stage 1: Legal and Jolly

The first stage of intoxication generally occurs after about two drinks, when you are still within the legal limit.

The alcohol causes you to feel more relaxed, jovial, slightly more confident and happier.

Your judgment could become slightly impaired.

### □Stage 2: Drunken Driver

You have had a couple more drinks and are no longer within the legal limit. Your brain's ability to function properly is put to the test. Your senses become impaired, which includes your eyesight, thus impairing your driving ability.

You begin to fumble and your speech becomes slurred. You should stop at this stage.

□Stage 3: Reckless Endangerment  
You are now well over the legal limit and your peripheral vision has seriously decreased.

You should not be driving as your ability to judge speeds, as well as your sensory ability is impaired. If you can still stand at this point, you should really stop now.

### □Stage 4: Drunk man walking

You will now more than likely not be able to stand up straight, will feel tired and lightheaded. The average person will not be able to drink after this point.

□Stage 5: Out for the count

need your stomach pumped and could become comatose.

### □Stage 6: Deadly Encounter

By this stage, you are in danger of the alcohol washing over the brain stem. If this is the case, you are in serious trouble.

The brain stem is where your breathing and blood circulation is controlled; when alcohol suppresses the brain stem, your breathing and blood flow could be affected, resulting in serious complications - at worst death.

### Did you know?

According to South Africans Against Drunk Driving (SADD) 18 000 South Africans die in motor car accidents every year. 150 000 others are seriously injured - alcohol