



Hooch: slang for home-brewed alcohol.

What's in it? Hooch is meant to produce **ethanol** by fermenting sugar with yeast.

Ethanol? When we say “alcohol” we really mean “ethyl alcohol” or “ethanol.” While all alcohol damages the body, ethanol is one the human body can partly break down. Other alcohols can be more dangerous!

Fancy some embalming fluid? One of the other alcohols that can cause serious health problems is **methanol** (methyl alcohol.) When this goes through the liver it turns in to **formaldehyde** which is used to preserve corpses. In living people it can cause serious liver and other organ damage.

Where hooch is made badly (especially with lots of fruit) it can contain significant amounts of methanol. Methanol poisoning can make you feel very sick, can cause blindness and in severe cases can be fatal.

Or some botulism? Fermenting takes place without oxygen being present. This makes it a great environment for botulism to thrive. Botulinum bacteria can cause fatal poisoning. The bacteria can come in from dirty food, soil, or unclean hands. Cases in America have been linked to cooked food which had gone off and been added to hooch.

Once in the mix it will increase in numbers and when drunk can cause serious and possible fatal infections.

Down Down! Drinking hooch on top of other substances – medication or illicit drugs – increases risk of fatal overdose. Some drugs which are relatively low risk on their own can be very dangerous in combination with alcohol, especially depressant drugs such as pregabalin, gabapentin, or diazepam (Valium). Alcohol combined with opiates (methadone, buprenorphine) is also much more dangerous. As hooch can vary massively in strength it is hard to judge how dangerous it will be when combined with pills.

And that's assuming that whoever is making the hooch didn't add something stronger to give it a little extra...kick.

Remember:

- Hooch may not be pure ethanol – and could contain toxic methanol
- Hooch mixes badly with other downers like opiates or benzos, and can cause fatal overdose
- Hooch can contain toxic bacteria like botulism which could kill

If you are concerned about your health after using Hooch, always speak to healthcare workers or the drugs team.