

# Tech review: Device tells drinkers when they're on the rocks

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How do you convince people to buy something they'd rather not have to use?

I guess you could ask an insurance salesman.

Certain things we buy, like first-aid kits or pepper spray, are in that category.

This week I'm reviewing such a product - the AlcoMate Revo, a portable breathalyzer.

Every day, people who drink make a decision about when they have had too much.

I'm a social drinker, and I've always wondered about my [blood alcohol content](#) after dinner and drinks or at the end of a party.

So when I was offered the chance to review the Revo, I jumped at the chance.

The AlcoMate Revo (\$219.95) is about the size of a deck of playing cards with one button and a single line, backlit LCD screen.

There is a hole on the right side in which you insert a small plastic mouthpiece.

When you remove the plastic rear cover to insert two AAA batteries (included), you'll see the pre-installed sensor, which is built into a replaceable fuel cell module.

I'm no breathalyzer expert, but from what I've read, older breathalyzers need to be sent back to the factory periodically to be recalibrated because their sensors are not removable.

But AK Globaltech, the manufacturer of the Revo, says its sensor requires no calibration and stays accurate for up to 1,000 tests or 12 months, whichever comes first.

1467314696-AlcoMate-Revo-1.jpg 1467314696-Still-5.jpg

There's a small sticker on each module with an expiration date. Replacement sensor modules cost \$90.

My Revo came in a nice, hard plastic case with a cloth pouch and a few extra mouthpieces.

The Revo is approved for use by Department of Transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard for [alcohol screening](#).

The user experience is quite good. Aside from putting the batteries in and sticking a mouthpiece in the hole in the side, there's nothing to set up.

You press the button to power up the Revo. If you hold down the button, you'll see a current cumulative test count.

In a few seconds, the screen will display the word "blow," and you blow steadily into the mouthpiece until you hear a click, which is very evident.

Then you wait about 5 seconds, and you'll see the result on the screen. To save the battery, the display will turn off after 15 seconds.

Revo is very simple to use and fast to return results.

There are a few warnings included in the operating instructions:

-You must wait at least 20 minutes after consuming anything by mouth before providing a breath sample. This includes any and all foods, gum, candy, mouthwash, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, cigarettes, etc. Failure to wait 20 minutes may lead to inaccurate results and may damage the sensor.

-Do not use the Revo to determine whether to drive.

-The Revo is an alcohol screening device, and as such the displayed results do not carry any legal status whatsoever, and are not admissible in court as evidence.

The last two warnings are important.

Just because you know your [blood alcohol level](#), it doesn't mean you're not impaired. If you drive after using a breathalyzer like the Revo and get pulled over, the officer is not going to care that you have your own machine.

So, don't rely on the Revo to make the decision to get behind the wheel or not, and don't think that the Revo results will get you out of any potential legal trouble.

I did find my own testing to be very informative, but since everyone's body reacts differently to situations, I'm keeping the results to myself.

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Pros: Easy to use, quick results, stays calibrated for a year.

Cons: Yearly cost to buy sensors, 20 minutes wait to test seems like an eternity.

Bottom line: I'm not often in a position where I need to know my BAC, but the Revo is perfect for those times.

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