

Alcoholic Beverages – Effects and Moderation

****PSA: Legal drinking age in the United States is 21!****

Once you turn 21 and are legally allowed to drink alcohol, you should be familiar with the adverse effects alcohol has on your body. Drinking alcohol over the moderate limit (no more than 1 drink for women and 2 drinks for men)* can have effects on your brain, heart, liver, pancreas, and immune system. Alcohol interferes with communication pathways, basically affecting the functioning of your brain. Also, alcohol can cause issues to your heart muscle and heart beat as well as increased blood pressure. In regards to your liver, excessive alcohol intake may cause inflammations in your liver. Furthermore, in reaction to alcohol intake, the pancreas secretes toxic substances that can eventually cause inflammation of your pancreas. All of these issues lead to a weaker immune system and will make your body an easy target for illnesses and diseases! The listed above effects of excessive alcohol intake are more long-term issues. Short-term effects of alcohol include stress, loss of appetite, weight gain, disturbed sleeping habits, and many more! Other than long-term and short-term health effects, alcohol has a big influence on weight loss. Alcohol has calories and lots of them!

But what is considered one drink?? One drink is a 12oz bottle of beer, 5oz glass of wine, or 1.5oz shot of liquor.

Don't worry, alcohol is not always bad! There are some benefits in *moderate* alcohol intake. These benefits include reducing the risk of heart disease, ischemic stroke (blocking of the arteries that lead to your brain), diabetes.

If you're interested in having a drink or two with friends, here are some ways to make you alcoholic beverage not as jam-packed with calories!

- Make a 'mocktail'! Make your favorite cocktail, but forget to add the alcohol. Have a glass of wine or cocktail and then switch to mocktails to reduce the intake of calories!
- When mixing drinks, go for healthier alternatives. These may include diet sodas, juices, *light* juices, lemonade, or sugar-free mixers. Tastes just the same, but with less calories!
- Go for a glass of wine, light beer, or simple cocktail with a healthier alternative mixer option

Resources

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/alcohols-effects-body>



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<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/effects-on-the-body/alcohol-and-your-health>

http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/drink-alcohol-only-in-moderation#the-basics_1

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/alcohol/art-20044551?pg=2>

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/low-calorie-cocktails?page=3>

