



# Alcohol and You

## Is Alcohol a Drug?

Alcohol is a drug that is a member of the narcotics family. Narcotics dull the senses, produce drowsiness, and become addictive with prolonged use. If enough alcohol is consumed, brain activity can be so depressed that coma or death could follow.

## What Is the Nutritional Value of Alcohol?

Technically, alcohol can be classified as a food item. Although it contains calories, alcohol has virtually no vitamins, minerals, or protein. Each time you consume one serving of alcohol (100-150 calories), you are gaining calories from a food which gives you no nutritional value in return.

## How Much Alcohol Does One Drink Contain?

Beverage	Alcohol Content (grams)
Beer (12 oz.)	13
Light Beer (12 oz.)	10
Wine (3.5 oz.)	12
Hard Liquor 1.5 oz. (Gin, Rum, Vodka, Whiskey)	15

## Is It Wise to Mix Beer and Exercise?

Drinking beer immediately before or during an athletic event is counter-productive to athletic performance. Since alcohol depresses the nervous system, your brain will not function as efficiently nor will your muscles work as skillfully. Drinking beer immediately after an athletic event is also unwise. Alcohol inhibits the release of ADH (antidiuretic hormone), which works to retain water in the body. Thus, in addition to losing fluids through sweat, you also lose fluids through more frequent urination. Instead, it is recommended that you drink three cups of water for every pound of sweat you lose after strenuous exercise.

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## Does Coffee Have a Sobering Effect?

The only way to sober up is with time. It takes about one and a half hours to metabolize one drink, depending on a person's body size, on previous drinking experience, and on how recently the person has eaten. Neither exercise nor a cold shower can help someone get sober. Giving someone a cup of coffee only makes the person feel wide awake while still being intoxicated.

## What Are the Negative Effects of Alcohol ?

Heavy drinking can cause malnutrition due to substitution of alcohol for food in the diet. Liver disease, brain damage, and even death can occur. The negative effects of alcohol misuse also affect young adults in other ways. People age 21 to 24 have the highest proportion (33%) of alcohol-related traffic accidents. Individuals who develop a high alcohol tolerance are not immune to this drug's negative physical and psychological effects. A high tolerance to alcohol indicates a pattern of heavy use and a developing problem.

If you think a friend has or may be developing a problem with alcohol use:

- Let the person know that you care.
- Be specific about your concern.
- Talk about the drinking problem when the person is sober.
- Address the behavior.
- Remember, denial is part of the disease.
- Get support for yourself. It can be emotionally difficult to confront a friend with an alcohol problem.

Problem drinkers are usually the last to acknowledge they have a problem. Do not get discouraged, all you can do is try. People may not be ready to make a change, but your effort is an important first step.

Please visit [www.snac.ucla.edu](http://www.snac.ucla.edu) to learn more about alcohol and its effects.



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## CALORIES IN YOUR DRINKS

Alcohol is considered a food item because it supplies your body with calories. However, the calories in alcohol are considered "empty" because they give the body no significant nutrients. In addition to other negative effects, consuming alcoholic beverages can quickly offset your well-balanced nutrition plan. Examine the following alcoholic beverages and mixers along with their caloric values.

Beverage	Calories
Pina Colada (6.8 oz. can)	525
Daiquiri (6.8 oz. can)	260
Beer (12 oz.)	150
Dessert Wine (3.5 oz.)	140
Martini (3 oz.)	140
Brandy, Gin, Rum, Vodka, Whiskey (1.5 oz.)	105
Cola (8 oz.)	100
Light Beer (12 oz.)	100
Table Wine (3.5 oz.)	85
Tonic, Ginger Ale (8 oz.)	80
Club Soda, Plain Seltzer, Diet Drinks (8 oz.)	1

## EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a mood-altering drug. You may think of alcohol as a stimulant, but it actually is a depressant because it has an anesthetic effect. Below is a list of effects associated with different levels of blood alcohol concentration. Effects vary from person to person.

Number of Drinks*	Blood Alcohol Concentration (for a 150 lb. person)	Effects of Alcohol
2	.05	• Judgement impaired
3	.08	• Considered legally drunk in California
4	.10	• Emotional control impaired; considered legally drunk in some states
6	.15	• Muscle coordination & reflexes impaired
8	.20	• Vision impaired
12	.30	• Severely drunk; totally out of control

\*consumed within one hour; each drink equal to about 12 g. of alcohol

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## **I CAN STILL DRIVE... I'VE ONLY HAD TWO BEERS!**

By drinking just two cans of beer in one hour, the average 160 lb. male doubles his chances of becoming involved in a traffic or household accident. This often comes as a surprise to people since alcohol makes them feel more capable and alert than they were before drinking. Make informed decisions about alcohol use!

## **DO YOU KNOW A PROBLEM DRINKER?**

School and social pressures may lead individuals to use alcohol as a way of dealing with stress. The problem is not only the amount of alcohol being used, but also the reasons for consuming alcohol. If you are worried about someone's drinking and wish to express your concern, do so when the person is sober and without using the label "alcoholic." Try to remain calm and honest, but remember that you may be met by many reactions, including defensiveness, denial, or agreement.

### **Dealing with Defensiveness**

- Let the drinker know you are concerned because you care.
- Express your dislike of the alcohol-related behaviors.
- Talk to friends or relatives who share a mutual concern.

### **Dealing with Denial**

- Examine the person's effect on you.
- Let the person know how you are affected.
- Set your own limits, and make some firm resolutions. For example, you may want to let the person know that drinking is not allowed in your room.

### **Dealing with Agreement**

If a person acknowledges a drinking problem, you are in an excellent position to guide the individual toward a solution by asking helpful, non-judgmental questions.

- Why do you think alcohol has become a problem for you?
- What do you think you can do to change the situation?
- What are you willing to do to change the situation?
- What can I do to help you?

Also, seek support for yourself. It is emotionally draining to deal with a friend who has an alcohol problem.