



connect

wellbeing, ability, recovery

ALCOHOL & WOMEN

Ladies, whatever age you are it's important to keep an eye on how much you're drinking and be aware of the short to long term effects of alcohol use.

Women's bodies, in general, process alcohol slower than mens

When they drink similar amounts of alcohol, women tend to feel the effects more than men, even compared to a man of a similar weight. Traditionally and statistically in Northern Ireland, women have drunk less than men. But in recent decades, the gap has narrowed in relation to alcohol consumption. And with this closing in the gap of alcohol consumption between the sexes, there is a number of resulting health implications for women to consider. Alcohol can affect fertility, put you women at risk of breast cancer and increase some side-effects of the menopause. Whatever age you are it's important to keep an eye on how much you're drinking and be aware of the short to long term effects of alcohol use. The recommended unit guidelines for both men and women are 14 units per week (spread over the week) with a minimum of 2 alcohol-free days.

Heavy eyes, bad skin, increased weight

There's no doubt alcohol can have some unwanted effects on the body. Alcohol impacts on the normal sleep process so you often wake up feeling and looking like you haven't had much rest. Alcohol dehydrates your body, including the skin causing poor skin conditioning. It's also thought to deprive the skin of certain vital vitamins and nutrients, so when you look in the mirror the morning after, you may not be so happy with what you see. Because we can't store alcohol in the body, our systems want to get rid of it as quickly as possible, and this process takes priority over absorbing nutrients and burning fat. Alcohol can affect your fertility and sexual performance Women who are trying for a baby should think about taking a break from alcohol and also encourage their partner to do the same.

The Department of Health recommends that women trying for a baby, should avoid alcohol altogether. If you are trying for a baby and do choose to drink, the government's advice is to not have more than one to two units of alcohol once or twice a week (two units is the equivalent to a 175 ml glass of wine), and not to get drunk. Alcohol can disrupt a woman's menstrual cycle and studies have shown that even drinking small amounts can reduce her chance of conceiving. But if you're trying for a baby, make sure you're not the only one on the soft drinks.

Alcohol affects male fertility too, so it's best for your partner to stop or cut back as well. In men, alcohol reduces testosterone levels and can harm sperm so that it's less able to move towards an egg. Alcohol can increase your risk of a host of serious health conditions About one in six women may develop a health problem caused by alcohol.



TIPS FOR STOPPING

Try having Alcohol free days. If you drink regularly, your body starts to build up a tolerance to alcohol. This is one of the main reasons why it's important to consider taking regular breaks from drinking. Test out having a break for yourself and see what positive results you notice. Stress less. Some people drink alcohol to relax, but in reality alcohol can make you feel even more stressed out. Try not to make alcohol key to your after work wind down, and consider some alternative stress-busters like hitting the gym or having a hot bath.

Know what you're drinking. Check out the ABV on a bottle of wine before you buy it. ABV stands for Alcohol by Volume, which is the percentage of the drink that is pure alcohol. It's not uncommon for a bottle of wine to be verging on 15% ABV, which could easily push you over the daily unit guidelines if you drink more than one glass. Producers are increasingly introducing 10% or lower ABV wines that are as palatable as their stronger counterparts. Look out for them when you're next buying a bottle.

HERE ARE 9 WAYS ALCOHOL AFFECTS YOUR BODY

1. Your workouts will suffer

Alcohol consumption is detrimental to any fitness activity and can affect your body and brain for several days. If your thinking a 5-k run will cancel out the drinks you had last night cancels out the effects think again! Having alcohol in your system can slow your recovery and lead to endurance destroying dehydration. Excessive alcohol consumption can break down the muscles in your thighs and glutes. Also, inflammation brought on by exercise will just add to the inflammation already caused by the alcohol. So the bottom line is to skip the wine before your regular workout days.

2. Alcohol can damage your DNA

Recent studies have found that alcohol, even moderate drinking over the weekend, can lead to oxidative stress and damage to your DNA. Research has shown that as few as 3 pints of beer a week in comparison to none at all have to potential to damage the cells in your body. In fact, you are twice as likely to damage your cells with even just a few cocktails that not drinking at all.

3. Alcohol will increase your appetite and your weight

Ever wondered why you feel more hungry after a few bebies? Alcohol suppresses leptin, a hunger-regulating hormone, which becomes a recipe for disaster if your trying to maintain a healthy weight level! As well as piling on the extra calories with drinking in general, your willpower to stick to a balanced diet is also affected.

4. Alcohol can leave you tired

Too much alcohol can lead to fatigue and in extreme cases, light-headedness and confusion. After a night on the booze your nutrient B12 levels can be totally depleted which is why the sofa seems so attractive the day after.



5. Alcohol will Zap your brain power

Alcohol can decrease the creation of adult brain cells by as much as 40 percent. Alcohol also affects the body's ability to regenerate, meaning it kills useful cells and inhibits your body to repair damaged ones. A habit of drinking one or two days a week will result in losing lots of neurons which will zap your brain power big time.

6. Your blood pressure will spike

Alcohol will cause a spike in your blood pressure. Studies have shown that women who drink more than 10 drinks per week were 12 points higher than normal. Studies have also shown that the spike in women was twice as high as that shown in men!

7. Alcohol will lower your mood

Alcohol is a depressant, so wine-fueled sobs aren't uncommon. If you are already feeling something negative it can become intensified when your drinking, increasing the chance of an unnecessary meltdown. Try to ditch the booze if your already feeling low or in a bad mood. Try telling a friend how alcohol makes you feel when your down to give you incentive to stay off it.

8. Alcohol ruins your sleep

Contrary to the thought that alcohol helps you sleep in actual fact it's doing the opposite. Alcohol reduces the ability to reach REM sleep and without it you will feel like you have had no sleep at all. If you are already feeling tired, try some caffeine free herbal tea before bed to chill you out rather than the tempting glass of red wine. You will feel better for it in the morning

9. Alcohol ups your risk of mortality

The hard fact is this, alcohol counts for 10 percent of deaths for adults between the ages of 20 and 64. That's 2.5 million years of potential life lost each year. Drink responsibly, remembering to stick to a maximum of 14 units per week while aiming for several alcohol-free days and consider laying off the booze completely.





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