



# FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

There are many mixed messages out there about alcohol. On the one hand, moderate amounts have been linked to health benefits. On the other, it is addictive and highly toxic — especially when you drink too much.

The truth is that the health effects of alcohol vary between individuals and depend on the amount and type of alcohol consumed.

## WHAT IS ALCOHOL?

---

The main psychoactive ingredient in alcoholic beverages is ethanol. Generally referred to as “alcohol,” ethanol is the substance that makes you drunk.

It's produced by yeasts that digest sugar in certain carb- rich foods, such as:

- Grapes — used to make wine.
- Grains — used to make beer.

Alcohol is one of the most popular psychoactive substances in the world. It can have powerful effects on your mood and mental state. By reducing self- consciousness and shyness, alcohol may encourage people to act without inhibition. At the same time, it impairs judgment and promotes behaviour people may end up regretting.

Some people drink small amounts at a time, while others tend to binge drink. Binge drinking involves drinking large amounts at a time to get drunk.

## ALCOHOL ON YOUR BODY

---

### YOUR LIVER'S ROLE

Your liver is a remarkable organ with hundreds of essential functions.

One of its main roles is to neutralize various toxic substances you consume. For this reason, your liver is particularly vulnerable to damage by alcohol intake. Liver diseases caused by alcohol consumption are collectively known as alcoholic liver diseases. The first of these to appear is fatty liver, characterized by increased fat inside liver cells.

Fatty liver gradually develops in 90% of those who drink more than a 1/2 ounce (15 ml) of alcohol per day and is usually symptomless and fully reversible.

In heavy drinkers, binge drinking may cause your liver to become inflamed. In worst-case scenarios, liver cells die and get replaced with scar tissue, leading to a serious condition called cirrhosis.

Cirrhosis is irreversible and associated with many serious health problems. In advanced cirrhosis, a liver transplant may be the only option.

### IMPACT ON YOUR BRAIN

Excessive alcohol consumption can have numerous adverse effects on your brain. Ethanol reduces communication between brain cells — a short-term effect responsible for many of the symptoms of being drunk.

Binge drinking may even lead to a blackout, a phenomenon characterized by memory loss, or amnesia, during a heavy drinking episode. These effects are only temporary, but chronic alcohol abuse may cause permanent changes in your brain, often leading to impaired brain function.

Because your brain is very sensitive to damage, chronic alcohol abuse may increase your risk of dementia and cause brain shrinkage in middle-aged and older adults.

In worst-case scenarios, severe alcohol-induced brain damage may impair people's ability to lead an independent life. Conversely, drinking moderately has been linked to a reduced risk of dementia — especially in older adults.

### DEPRESSION

Alcohol intake and depression are closely but complexly associated. While alcohol intake and depression seem to increase the risk of one another simultaneously, alcohol abuse may be the stronger causal factor.

Many people facing anxiety and depression drink intentionally to reduce stress and improve mood. While drinking may provide a few hours of relief, it will worsen your overall mental health and spark a vicious cycle.

In fact, because heavy drinking is a major cause of depression in some individuals, treating the underlying alcohol abuse leads to big improvements.

### BODY WEIGHT

Obesity is a serious health concern to the world. Alcohol is the second most calorie-rich nutrient after fat - packing about 7 calories per gram.

Beer has a similar number of calories as sugary soft drinks, ounce for ounce, whereas red wine has twice as much.

However, studies investigating the link between alcohol and weight have provided inconsistent



results. It seems that drinking habits and preferences may play a role.

For example, moderate drinking is linked to reduced weight gain, whereas heavy drinking is linked to increased weight gain. In fact — while drinking beer regularly may cause weight gain — wine consumption may cause weight loss.

## HEART HEALTH

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in modern society. It is a broad category of diseases, the most common of which are heart attacks and strokes.

The relationship between alcohol and heart disease is complex and depends on several factors.

Light to moderate drinking is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, while heavy drinking appears to increase the risk. There are several possible reasons for the beneficial effects of drinking Light to moderately.

Light to Moderate alcohol consumption may:

- Raise “good” HDL cholesterol in your bloodstream.
- Decrease blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease.
- Lower your blood concentration of fibrinogen, a substance that contributes to blood clots.
- Cut the risk of diabetes, another major risk factor for heart disease.
- Reduce stress and anxiety temporarily.

## TYPE 2 DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes affects about 8% of the world’s population. Characterized by abnormally high blood sugar, type 2 diabetes is caused by a reduced uptake of glucose, or blood sugar, by your cells — a phenomenon known as insulin resistance.

Drinking alcohol in moderation appears to reduce insulin resistance, fighting the main symptoms of diabetes.

As a result, drinking alcohol with meals may cut the rise in blood sugar by 16–37% more than water. Blood sugar between meals — known as fasting blood glucose - may also decline.

In fact, your overall diabetes risk tends to drop with moderate alcohol consumption. However, when it comes to heavy drinking and binge drinking, your risk rises.

## CANCER

Cancer is a serious disease caused by abnormal growth of cells. Alcohol consumption is a risk factor for cancers of the mouth, throat, colon, breast, and liver.

The cells lining your mouth and throat are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of alcohol.

Even light alcohol consumption — up to one drink per day — is linked to a 20% increased risk of mouth and throat cancer.

Your risk increases the more you consume. More than four drinks daily appear to cause a fivefold increase in your risk of mouth and throat cancer, as well as an increase in your risk of breast, colon, and liver cancer.

## DANGERS OF ADDICTION

Some people become addicted to the effects of alcohol, a condition known as alcohol dependence or alcoholism. An estimated 10% of the UK are believed to have been dependent on alcohol at some point in their life. Alcohol dependence is one of the main causes of alcohol abuse and disability in the UK and a strong risk factor for various diseases.

Numerous factors can predispose people to problematic drinking, such as family history, social environment, mental health, and genetics. Many different subtypes of alcohol dependence exist, characterized by alcohol cravings, inability to abstain or loss of self-control when drinking. As a rule of thumb, if alcohol is adversely affecting your quality of life, you may have a problem with alcohol dependence or alcoholism.

## WHICH TYPE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE IS BEST?

What you drink matters less than how much you drink. However, some alcoholic drinks are better than others. Red wine appears to be particularly beneficial because it is very high in healthy antioxidants. In fact, red wine is linked to more health benefits than any other alcoholic beverage. That said, consuming high amounts does not provide greater health benefits. Heavy drinking



causes health problems — regardless of the type of beverage.

## HERE IS A ROUGH GUIDE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES VS INFORMATION.

---

### 1. 1 Pint of Beer

Beer is one of the oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic drinks in the world, and the third most popular drink overall after water and tea. Beer is brewed from cereal grains—most commonly from malted barley, though wheat, maize, rice, and oats are also used.

Calories 204

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 31 minutes of cycling
- 20 minutes of running
- 1.2 hours of cleaning

### 2. 1 Pint Lager

Lagers can be pale, amber, or dark. Pale lager is the most widely consumed and commercially available style of beer. As well as maturation in cold storage, most lagers are distinguished using a “bottom-fermenting” yeast that ferments at relatively cold temperatures.

Calories 176

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 27 minutes of cycling
- 18 minutes of running
- 1 hour of cleaning

### 3. 1 pint of Guinness

Guinness is a dark Irish dry stout that originated in the brewery of Arthur Guinness at St. James’s Gate, Dublin, Ireland, in 1759. It is one of the most successful alcohol brands worldwide, brewed in almost 50 countries, and available in over 120. Sales in 2011 amounted to 850 million litres.

Calories 210

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 32 minutes of cycling

- 21 minutes of running
- 1.2 hours of cleaning

### 4. 1 Pint of Cider

Cider is most often compared to beer because it’s slightly bubbly and contains less alcohol by volume than its fellow fruit-fermented drink, wine. This is because even the sweetest apples contain much less sugar than grapes. On average, hard cider contains 4 to 6 percent alcohol.

Calories 239

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 36 minutes of cycling
- 24 minutes of running
- 1.4 hours of cleaning

### 5. 175ml glass of White wine

White wine is a wine that is fermented without skin contact. The colour can be straw-yellow, yellow-green, or yellow-gold. It is produced by the alcoholic fermentation of the non-coloured pulp of grapes, which may have a skin of any colour. White wine has existed for at least 4000 years.

Calories 130

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 19 minutes of cycling
- 13 minutes of running
- 47 minutes of cleaning

### 6. 175ml glass of Red wine

Red wine is a type of wine made from dark-coloured grape varieties. The actual colour of the wine can range from intense violet, typical of young wines, through to brick red for mature wines and brown for older red wines.

Calories 148

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 22 minutes of cycling
- 15 minutes of running
- 54 minutes of cleaning



## 7. 175ml glass of Rose wine

A rosé is a type of wine that incorporates some of the colour from the grape skins, but not enough to qualify it as a red wine. It may be the oldest known type of wine, as it is the most straightforward to make with the skin contact method.

Calories 139

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 21 minutes of cycling
- 14 minutes of running
- 51 minutes of cleaning

## 8. 1 glass of champagne (120ml)

Champagne is a French sparkling wine. The term Champagne can be used as a generic term for sparkling wine, but in the EU and some countries it is illegal to label any product Champagne unless it came from the Champagne wine region of France and is produced under the rules of the appellation.

Calories 89

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 13 minutes of cycling
- 9 minutes of running
- 32 minutes of cleaning

## 9. 25ml Spirit shot

A liqueur is an alcoholic drink composed of distilled spirits and additional flavourings such as sugar, fruits, herbs, and spices. Often served with or after dessert, they are typically heavily sweetened and un-aged beyond a resting period during production, when necessary, for their flavours to mingle.

Calories 55

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 8 minutes of cycling
- 5 minutes of running
- 20 minutes of cleaning

## 10. 275ml Alcopop

An alcopop is any of certain flavoured alcoholic beverages with relatively low alcohol content, including: Malt beverages to which various fruit juices or other flavourings have been added.

Calories 190

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 29 minutes of cycling
- 19 minutes of running
- 1.1 hours of cleaning

## 11. 50ml Baileys Irish cream

Baileys Irish Cream is an Irish cream liqueur – an alcoholic drink flavoured with cream, cocoa, and Irish whiskey – made by Diageo at Nangor Road, in Dublin, Ireland and in Mallusk, Northern Ireland. Owned by Gilbeys of Ireland, the trademark is currently owned by Diageo.

Calories 175

Equivalent activities to burn off the calories

- 26 minutes of cycling
- 17 minutes of running
- 1 hours of cleaning

