

TONIC

LONDON

DON'T WISH FOR A HEALTHIER BODY. OWN ONE.

27 NOVEMBER 2017



WITH THE PARTY SEASON UPON US, ITS TIME TO UNCORK THE TRUTH

We do a lot of drinking during December. In fact the average Brit can drink two or three times their usual alcohol intake over the Christmas and New Year period. According to stats, Brits spend more than £2bn just on the alcohol we drink in our 165 million December pub outings, never mind what we cart home from the shops. So with Christmas only 4 weeks away, what is the best alcohol to drink without sabotaging your health and your weight, and why does alcohol cause weight gain?

Calories: Alcohol contains more calories per gram than protein and carbohydrates. Increased calorie intake leads to weight gain so the alcohol with the least amount of calories is the best choice. Don't be fooled by low carb beers which have similar alcohol and calorie content as full strength beers. Our bodies cannot store alcohol calories as body fat or glycogen and will use it as an immediate source of fuel.

Alcoholic drinks are full of empty calories and have no nutritional value. They can also be full of sugar. A pint of cider can contain as many as five teaspoons of sugar.

Drinking alcohol reduces your ability to make good food choices resulting in snacking on high fat/sugar foods, which are high in calories.

Cutting back on alcohol can have some positive effects on how you look and feel within a few days. Brighter skin, better sleep, more time and energy.

Wines, spirits and beers can have differing levels of alcohol, so it is not simply a question of the size of the drink.

Here is a guide to help you keep an eye on your alcohol intake.

A pint of ale or stout contains as many calories as a bagel.

An alcopop can contain up to 171 calories, similar to a hot chocolate with whipped cream.

A pint of beer is the same as eating a large slice of pizza.

A large glass of wine can add 228 calories to your dinner. That's similar to an ice cream.

A shot of dark spirit, like whisky, with mixer contains 106 calories, similar to a chocolate mousse.

Ordering a 50ml 'double' spirit measure at a pub or bar makes your drink even more calorific – a double gin and mixer contains 149 calories, similar to a chocolate filled pancake.

This may sound like good news but it results in fat mobilisation from your body fat stores being reduced and the calories from any food you are eating when drinking will be stored as body fat. This is an exceptionally good reason to eat well when you are drinking.

Alcohol contains lots of energy (calories) with no fibre. Fibre in the stomach tells our brain we are full and hopefully we stop eating and consuming too many calories. Without fibre it is easy to over consume the calories in alcohol.



Drinking any level of alcohol regularly carries a health risk for anyone, but if men and women limit their intake to no more than 14 units a week it keeps the risk of illness like cancer and liver disease low.

Here's what you can do to limit the damaging effects that alcohol has on your body, yet not give up completely. These tips will help you stay on top of your health and weight this month while you still enjoy a drink or two.

1. Stay within the guidelines.
2. Have a majority of alcohol-free days
3. Stay well hydrated. Help your body clear out the alcohol by drinking plenty of water between alcoholic drinks. It's estimated that your body needs four-parts water to every one-part alcohol to remove it from your system. Drink 500ml to 1 litre of water before you consume any alcohol then drink one glass of water between every alcoholic drink.
4. Never drink on an empty stomach as this floods your body with alcohol and forces your liver to work too hard. Make sure that you eat carbohydrates and fats before drinking alcohol to line the stomach, prevent nausea, hangovers and to avoid getting drunk. Eating a healthy meal before you go out will stop the snacking on poor food choices. Food will also absorb some of the alcohol, thereby slowing its delivery into your blood stream. This allows your body to process the toxins slowly and safely.
5. Keep an eye on your urine. Alcohol is a diuretic; in other words it encourages your body to flush away water. If your urine is dark amber or strong smelling your body is dehydrated and if you drink alcohol this can stress your liver.
6. Drink slowly. This gives your body – and more importantly your liver – time to metabolise and flush the toxins from your body.
7. No matter how dusty and sluggish you feel the next day get up and exercise to get your metabolism and fat burning going.
8. Take a good quality vitamin B complex before you start drinking and again the next day as alcohol metabolism uses up B vitamin stores rapidly.

Cheryl Hicks offers Tonic patients complimentary support with motivation, health and well-being. Drop Cheryl an email on cherylhicks@me.com for free support and further information.