

Alcohol and Weight Loss

Alcohol and weight loss are like oil and water. They do not mix. There is, of course, a time and a place for an occasional drink but it's not when you are trying to lose weight.

When you consume more calories than your body needs, you gain weight. Pure alcohol contains about 7 calories per gram, which makes it almost twice as fattening as carbohydrates or protein (both contain approximately 4 calories per gram) and only just under the calorific value for fat which contains approximately 9 calories per gram. Thus, if you want to reduce body fat and lose weight you need to be mindful of the many calories that exist in alcohol.

People often forget to count the calories they drink and think only of the number of calories in a meal but it all adds up. The thing to remember is that alcoholic drinks give you calories but no other nutrition. It only adds empty calories to your diet.

Beside this, there are numerous ways alcohol affects your diet. As a diuretic, alcohol causes water loss and dehydration. Along with this water loss, you lose important minerals such as magnesium, potassium, calcium and zinc. These minerals are vital to the maintenance of fluid balance, chemical reactions and muscle contraction and relaxation.

You may have noticed in the past that drinking may help induce sleep. But for the most part the sleep you get isn't very deep. As a result you get less rest which can trigger you to eat more calories the next day. Alcohol can also increase the amount of acid that your stomach produces causing your stomach to become inflamed. Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to serious health problems, including stomach ulcers, liver disease and heart troubles.

One of the biggest problems with alcohol when you are trying to lose weight is that it actually stimulates your appetite and can also increase feelings of hunger. While you might be full from a comparable amount of calories from food, several drinks might not fill you up. On top of that, research shows that if you drink before or during meal, both your inhibitions and willpower reduce. You are also more likely to overeat – especially greasy or fried foods – which can add to your waistline. Having your judgement impaired and stimulating your appetite is a recipe for failure if you are trying to follow a weight loss plan. To avoid this, wait to order that drink until you're done with your meal.

Many foods accompany drinks such as wine and cheese, beer and peanuts. The latter are salty which can make you thirsty, encouraging you to drink even more. To avoid over-drinking, sip on a glass of water in between each alcoholic beverage.

It's easy to forget that you can drink as many calories as you eat. Remember to check the serving size and to add the calories from any juice or fizzy drink that is combined with the alcohol.

The next time you reach for a cocktail before your meal consider if it's worth the weight that you could be gaining from it. Research has shown a 20% increase in calories consumed at a meal when alcohol was consumed before the meal. There was a total calorific increase of 33% when the calories from the alcohol were added. Along with the increase in weight you can have an increased risk to your health because of where you gain the weight and that consuming elevated amounts of alcohol is associated with abdominal obesity in men. Many people joke about this being a "beer belly." Unfortunately a "beer belly" puts you at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes, elevated blood lipids, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

The late-night munchies are often associated with a night of drinking. Have you ever realised that anytime you drink alcohol you are hungrier or you end up eating more than usual and end up picking and craving.

Regulating your calorie consumption is the key to successful weight loss and maintenance. A balanced diet will assist with curbing your hunger and providing the necessary nutrients for health and wellness. Alcohol is not considered necessary in a healthy diet. Instead, it provides a lot of calories and negatively impacts many aspects of your health. If you choose to consume alcohol, you will need to limit the quantity and frequency that you do so. You will also have to count the calories from alcohol to fit within your daily goal. You can limit calories in your drink by choosing those with less alcohol and a limited amount of sweetened beverages. By drinking water, you will save many calories.

Here are some tips for calorie reduction when consuming alcohol:

- Have one non-alcoholic drink in between each alcoholic drink
- Select light versions whenever possible. "Light" means fewer calories, but these products are not calorie or alcohol free so you will still need to limit your intake
- Always have food which includes protein in your stomach before you have a drink
- Keep water available to quench your thirst whilst you drink your alcoholic beverages
- Learn to sip your drink to make it last longer
- Maintain your regular eating routine and aim to eat an adequate source of protein at least every 3-4 hours.
- Have a liquid protein supplement with a large glass of water before you go to bed
- Aim to have a good quality protein healthy breakfast as soon as you wake.



Motivation
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

It's not just what you eat, it's why