

WHAT IS ALCOHOL

According to the World Health Organization, "Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties that has been widely used in many cultures for centuries." The kind we consume in beverages is called ethanol. It is a depressant, meaning it slows vital body functions.

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

The greater amount of alcohol consumed the greater the risk of cancer and other diseases.

A low-level drinker has a lower risk than a high level or frequent drinker. Our bodies do not require any alcohol and consuming none is most ideal for our health.

BENEFITS OF LOW/NO ALCOHOL

GREATER REDUCED CANCER RISK

Alcohol consumption can dramatically increase cancer risk of head/neck, breast, colon, liver, and pancreatic cancers. It causes chemical and physical changes in our bodies that makes cancer more likely, and also can damage cells and DNA.

HEALTHIER BRAIN

Heavy alcohol consumption can cause deficits in memory function and reaction time. It can also increase risk of developing depression.

HEALTHIER LIVER AND HEART

Long-term heavy alcohol consumption can weaken your heart and liver, leading to cirrhosis and cardiovascular disease.

LESS "EMPTY" CALORIES

Alcohol has 7 calories per gram (compared to carbohydrates/protein with 4 calories per gram and fat 9 calories per gram). When mixed with other things like juice, sodas, and sugar, a couple drinks can rack in hundreds of low-nutrient calories that can lead to excess body fat.

HOW MUCH ALCOHOL COUNTS AS A DRINK?

14 g or 0.6 fl oz of pure alcohol is considered a "Standard Drink." This looks like...

BEER

- 12 fl oz of a regular beer (about 5% alcohol)
- 8-10 fl oz of malt liquor or malt beverages (about 7% alcohol.)

WINE

- 5 fl oz of table wine (about 12% alcohol)
- 3-4 fl oz of fortified wine (sherry or port) (about 17% alcohol.)

HARD LIQUOR

- 1.5 fl oz of distilled spirits, brandy, or cognac (about 40% alcohol.)

**this information was obtained from niaaa.nih.gov*

FUN ALCOHOL-FREE DRINK IDEAS!

FROZEN SUMMER MOCKTAILS

- Strawberry Daquiris, Pina Coladas, and Frozen Margaritas still taste great without the alcohol.
- Easy to blend up a pre-made mixer (or your own ingredients) with some ice and pour into a fancy glass.
- Get creative with flavors!

EXPERIMENT WITH FRUIT JUICES

- Mixing pineapple and orange juice creates a delicious tropical drink. Try adding a splash of grenadine or cherry syrup!
- Muddle some mint leaves with fresh lime slices. Add to a glass with lime juice, sparkling water, and a touch of honey for a refreshing virgin mojito.
- Try making your own juices and smoothies in a blender. Fresh squeezed lemonade is always a fun experiment as well!

SPARKLING WATER

- As this drink is growing in popularity, there are lots of flavor options at the grocery store.
- Add some fresh berries, lemon/lime slices, cucumbers, or fresh herbs to your sparkling water.
- If you don't love sparkling water, try adding a splash or 1/2 cup of fruit juice to your drink.

This is just a start to thousands of drink ideas that can be made. Non-alcoholic beers and wines are also available in some locations. Another drink, Kombucha is growing in popularity and can provide some gut-healthy probiotics in a flavorful fun drink.