

HAVE A DRINK ON ME

It is thought that low to moderate alcohol consumption may offer some protective health effects. However, high alcohol consumption increases the risk of heart, stroke, dementia and vascular diseases, liver cirrhosis and some cancers. It also contributes to disability and death through accidents, violence, suicide and homicide - so it's something we all need to learn to moderate yet still enjoy.

WHEN DOES MY DRINKING CREATE A HEALTH RISK?

Long term risk for males is categorised as follows: An average daily consumption of up to four standard drinks is considered 'low risk', five to six 'risky' and seven or more 'high risk'.

Long term risk for females is categorised as follows: An average daily consumption of up to two standard drinks is considered 'low risk', three to four 'risky' and five or more 'high risk'.

For short term risk, otherwise known as binge drinking, the consumption of 11 or more standard drinks for males or seven or more for females on any one day is considered 'high risk'.

DRINKS

Strength of alcoholic drinks is measured by percentage of alcohol by volume (abv) generally shown on bottles as vol, e.g. 40% vol on a bottle of spirits.

- Spirits have 38-45%;
- Fortified wines (e.g. sherry) 18-25%;
- Liqueurs (e.g. cointreau) 20-40%;
- Red, white and rosé wines 9-13%;
- Beer, cider and lager are normally 4-6% though extra strong brands can have up to 10%.

HEALTHY CHOICES

What are the best choices – well the answer here is WATER, however if this is not possible then here are some guidelines on how to drink sensibly. Alcohol can constitute a lot of what we call “empty calories” which can contribute to sluggishness and putting on weight. It can also aggravate depression and stress related conditions. So let's also look at how much energy you would need to do to compensate for your choice of alcoholic drink.

BEERS

In the USA, 40% of the beer market is low calorie beer. We seem a little behind here in Oz, with only 1% of the market taken up by low calorie beers.

100ml Regular Beer (5% alcohol)

18 mins walking at 7km/hour or 6 mins of running approximately

100 ml Light Beer (4.2% alcohol)

16mins walking at 7km/hour or 5 mins of running approximately

WINE

In Australia, wine makers are now starting to produce low calorie wines- so keep an eye out for them. One such manufacturer is Hewitsons Wine- Mermaid label.

Regardless of whether the wine is white, red or a champagne a good rule of thumb is for each 100ml glass you would need to do 28 mins walking at 7km/hour or 9 mins of running . Some of the more expensive champagnes will have higher calorie counts due to the additional sugar that is added. So as the price goes up, so does the workout time. Doesn't seem fair really, does it?

SPIRITS

In an average shot of spirit, you would need to either walk at 7km/hour for 11 minutes or run for approximately 3 minutes. Adding any mixer pretty much doubles the work off time, with cola based mixers being the worst and tonic water or lemonade coming in with

some time to spare. Or get use to having your favourite with ice- certainly cuts the calories.

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR INTAKE

1. Try alternating alcoholic drinks with low calorie non alcoholic drinks or water.
2. Add soda water or sparkling mineral water to your white wine to make a spritzer.
3. Don't skip meals to allow for drinks- alcohol won't satisfy your hunger. Alcohol lowers blood sugar levels which sends signals to the brain that you are hungry- with alcohol in your system, willpower goes out of the window and the snack attack will kick in.
4. Eat a proper meal before going out or eat whilst you're drinking to slow down alcohol absorption

WHY NOT CONSIDER A HEALTHY JUICE OPTION?

A valuable health property of juices is their fluid content. At least 65% of the body is composed of water. Water is a major component of the blood; with blood feeding the cells are carrying away waste products of metabolism. The healthier the blood, the more vital the system. Fresh juices help to cleanse the blood. The pure fluids in fresh juices are excellent for quenching the thirst as well. Fresh juices are also packed full of vital vitamins for proper body function, enzymes that help build and rebuild the body.

MINERAL ELECTROLYTE DRINK – for post exercise rehydration- better than a beer!

You can make a superior mineral-electrolyte drink to take after strenuous exercise by juicing 4 parts of watermelon rind with one part each of cucumber and celery, and mixing an equal proportion of this juice with filtered water. Packed with minerals, this drink has a slightly salty taste.

8 VEGETABLE DRINK

½ medium tomato

¼ medium cucumber

1 medium carrot

1 stalk celery

1 handful spinach

½ cup cabbage

1 eschalot

Wash ingredients. Combine, Juice and serve. Salt and pepper can be added to this if desired.

BERRY NICE

1 Cup blueberries or another berry (frozen)

2 medium pears

Wash fruit. Juice pears. Combine with berries. Blend at medium speed for 2 minutes and serve.

So the choice is yours- have fun and experiment with non alcoholic options.

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About Shirley:

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