



Alcohol* and Diabetes



What happens in your body when you drink alcohol?

- Your body considers it a toxin and wants to get rid of it.
- Your liver starts working to break down the alcohol.
- Your liver stores sugar and can *usually* jump in to help if your blood sugar is getting really low. But if your liver is busy breaking down alcohol and unable to raise your blood sugar for you, you have a much higher risk of having a **severe low blood sugar** when drinking.
- Risk of low blood sugars can continue for 24 hours after drinking alcohol.

What's your risk?

You are at risk of severe lows if you are taking insulin or certain diabetes pills.

Top 10 Ways to Drink Safely:

1. Never drink on an empty stomach.
2. Eat a carbohydrate meal or a snack while drinking.
3. Don't drink within 2 hours of exercise.
4. Drink in moderation.
5. Check blood sugar frequently.
- 6. Do not take extra insulin to cover carbs in drinks.**
7. Wear your medical ID and drink with friends who know you have diabetes.
8. Check blood sugar before going to bed. Have a carb snack if you're <130. Set an alarm to wake up in the morning. Ask your roommates to check on you.
9. Hung over? Throwing up? Not eating? You still need your insulin! If you have concerns, call your diabetes team.
10. NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE.



What's considered one drink? (It takes about 2 hours to break down *one* drink.)

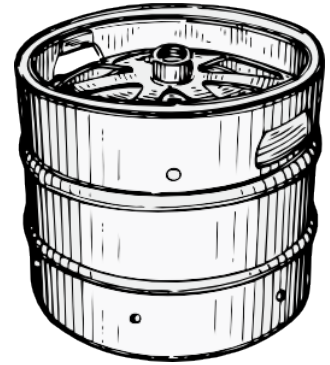
5-ounces of wine

12-ounce beer (light or regular)

1.5-ounce of liquor (vodka, whiskey, gin, etc)

Resources:

American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org



*The staff of Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus does not endorse or encourage the consumption of alcohol for individuals under the legal drinking age of 21.