

What do I need to know about alcohol?



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How much can I drink?

- Up to 1 drink a day for women
- Up to 2 drinks a day for men

How much is one drink?

A drink, or “drink equivalent” is:

- 12 ounces (oz) of beer (5% alcohol by volume, or ABV)
- 5 oz of wine (12% ABV)
- 1.5 oz of hard liquor (40% ABV)

DRINK EQUIVALENT

A drink contains .6 oz or 14 grams of alcohol. This is also called a *drink equivalent*. Drinks with a higher alcohol content may have more than one *drink equivalent* in a serving.

Not all drinks are the same. Drinks vary depending on the portion size and how much alcohol is in them. For example:

- 1 can of beer counts as about 1- 2 drinks
- 1 glass of wine counts as about 1-2 drinks
- 1 cocktail counts as about 1-4 drinks

What is the alcohol content of beer?

Most beer ranges from 4.2% to 11% alcohol.

ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

The amount of alcohol in a drink is called *Alcohol by Volume (ABV)*. The more alcohol, the higher the ABV.

How many servings of alcohol are in a 12 oz can of beer?

It depends on how much alcohol is in the beer.

- If the beer is 5% ABV, then it is 1 drink equivalent



- If the beer is 9% ABV, then it's almost 2 drink equivalents



- If it is light beer with 4.2% ABV, then it is less than 1 drink equivalent



What is the alcohol content of wine?

Most wines range from 12% to 17% alcohol.

How many servings of alcohol are in 5 oz of wine?

- A 12% ABV wine is 1 drink equivalent



- A 17% ABV wine is 1.4 drink equivalents



What is the alcohol content of hard liquor?

Liquor (80 proof) is usually about 40% alcohol. If you drink it straight, 1.5 oz is 1 drink equivalent.

One oz of 100 proof liquor (50% alcohol) is also 1 drink equivalent.



A mixed drink can be more than 1 drink equivalent.

- 6 oz of mojito counts as about 1.3 drink equivalents



- 6 oz of margarita counts as about 3.4 drink equivalents



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How can I find out if my drink counts as more than one?

Alcohol often lists the ABV on the label. The higher the ABV, the more alcohol. You can compare labels to see which drinks have less alcohol. If you are at a bar or restaurant, ask your server.

Portion Size

If you drink beer from a 12 oz can, then it's easy to know how much you get. But what about a glass or mug? You may be getting a lot more than you think.

- A 22 oz. souvenir cup equals almost 2 cans of beer



- A regular bottle of wine holds 5 servings



- Half a pint of hard liquor is 4.5 servings



- A 40 ounce bottle of malt liquor is 4.7 servings



Calorie content

If you want to lose weight, try these tips:

- Cut how much alcohol you drink
- Drink from a smaller glass
- Drink light beer instead of regular
- Try dry wine instead of sweet
- When mixing cocktails, use sugar free mixers like diet soda or diet tonic

Tips to slow down:

- Don't drink on an empty stomach
- Sip slowly
- Space out your drinks. Have a sparkling water or diet soda between alcoholic drinks
- Know the common size of your favorite drinks

Who should avoid alcohol?

For many people, it's not safe to drink alcohol. You shouldn't drink if you:

- Are going to drive
- May be pregnant
- Are under 21
- Have a history of alcohol abuse
- Have certain medical conditions
- Take certain medicines
- Had a doctor tell you not to

If you have questions, ask your doctor if alcohol is safe for you.

If someone you know drinks too much, get help at 1-800-662-HELP.

References:

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

**For more information on alcohol, go to
www.RethinkingDrinking.niaaa.nih.gov**

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* does not recommend that people who do not drink, start drinking.

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