



# ALCOHOL AND ITS EFFECTS ON YOUR HEALTH

## AUTHOR

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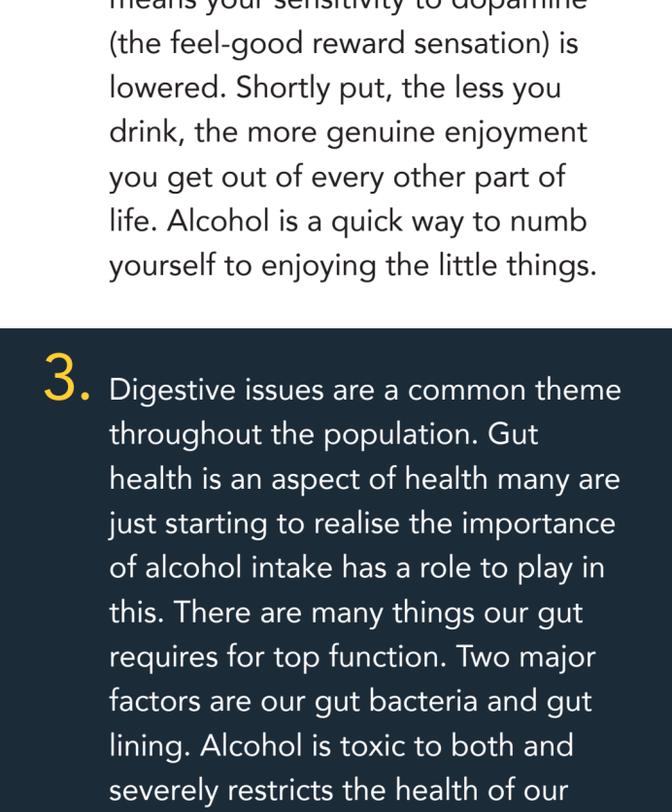
**A casual drink after a long day or a big night out with friends, alcohol is deeply ingrained into human culture.**

**W**e consume it often enough, but do we really know what goes on in our bodies when we drink it?

Knowing what goes on inside is a good first step to regulating your intake and perhaps toning down the overall consumption.

Let's look at the 5 main effects alcohol has on our health, and some steps to counteracting any negative downsides.

**1.** The one point most important for many is around weight gain. When you have alcohol in your system, all the other macronutrients (carbs, fats, etc) get put on hold for processing. This means they go straight to body fat until the alcohol is out of the system. In this way, it is not so much the alcohol itself that turns to body fat - it is a catalyst for everything else you have with it to be stored for the long term.

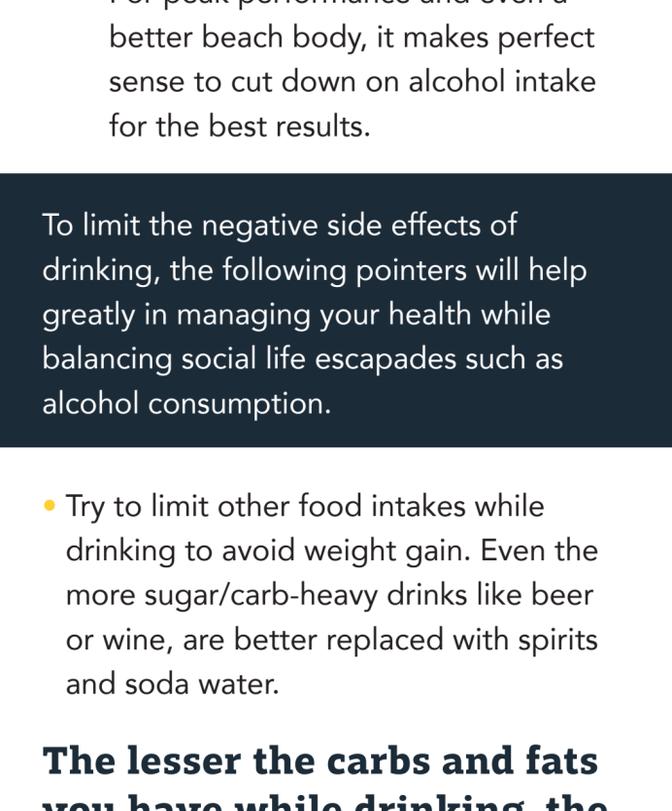


**Cutting out or reducing your intake is one of the most effective ways to shift some kilos.**

**2.** Just like sugar, alcohol is a dopamine-releasing chemical for the brain. This means it is addictive, but it also means your sensitivity to dopamine (the feel-good reward sensation) is lowered. Shortly put, the less you drink, the more genuine enjoyment you get out of every other part of life. Alcohol is a quick way to numb yourself to enjoying the little things.

**3.** Digestive issues are a common theme throughout the population. Gut health is an aspect of health many are just starting to realise the importance of alcohol intake has a role to play in this. There are many things our gut requires for top function. Two major factors are our gut bacteria and gut lining. Alcohol is toxic to both and severely restricts the health of our microbiome. This is a direct cause for the development or worsening of gut issues such as IBS, leaky gut syndrome, or candida overgrowth.

**4.** On a similar note, the impact on our gut health also reduces how good we feel. This is due to about 90% of our happy hormone serotonin being produced in the gut. The negative impact on our gut health from drinking means a direct impact on our mood.



**Alcohol may make us jolly in the short term, but long term our mental and emotional health suffers from this chemical imbalance.**

**5.** Lastly, if you are a fitness junkie or just looking to stay in better shape; it should be known that alcohol reduces your protein production by up to 50%. This means slower recovery, less muscle gain and maintenance, and lower energy levels. For peak performance and even a better beach body, it makes perfect sense to cut down on alcohol intake for the best results.

To limit the negative side effects of drinking, the following pointers will help greatly in managing your health while balancing social life escapades such as alcohol consumption.

- Try to limit other food intakes while drinking to avoid weight gain. Even the more sugar/carb-heavy drinks like beer or wine, are better replaced with spirits and soda water.

**The lesser the carbs and fats you have while drinking, the far lesser weight you will gain in that time.**

- When cutting down on drinking, it's important to replace it with another dopamine releasing activity. Something rewarding. A new hobby, exercise, nature walks, learning a new skill, anything gratifying will help stave off the hormone cravings for a drink.



- Around drinking sessions, it is important to help your gut recover and repair. Probiotics, probiotic foods, high fibre intake, and even fasting/time-restricted feeding are all great ways to allow your gut the time and resources to heal and function well.

The odd drink is totally fine, however, it is good to be aware of our health regarding alcohol and being mindful of its effects.