

# Drinking Your Calories With Alcohol

Have you ever wondered how many calories are in an alcoholic drink? Realistically, many college students may not consider how alcohol impacts their health, how many calories are in a drink, or limit themselves to one or two drinks per night.

Alcohol is full of calories with very few nutrients. Multiply the number of drinks you have per night by the calorie content and you have a recipe for weight gain!

One study showed a 20% increase in calories consumed at a meal when alcohol was consumed before the meal. There was a total caloric increase of 33% when the calories from the alcohol were added.



While the best way to avoid packing on the pounds is to cut out alcohol altogether, realistically, having alcohol in moderation is best!

## How many calories are you drinking?

Although calorie information for drinks and brands varies, this information is based on averages for one drink.

Beverage	Ounces	Calories
80 proof hard liquor	1.5	96
Wine	5	100
Light beer	12	110
Regular beer	12	150
Whiskey sour	4	160
Wine cooler	12	200
Margarita	6	250
Long Island Iced Tea	6	350

## Think about it!

If you drink 6 regular beers in one night, that's 900 calories! If you need a 2000 calorie diet, that's nearly half of your calorie needs!

## Did you know?

- ◆ Of OSU students who drink, 96% at least sometimes eat before they drink. (NCHA 2006)
- ◆ 77% of OSU students drank at most once/week in the past year. (CORE 2007)
- ◆ 71% of OSU students drink 0-6 drinks per week. (CORE 2007)

## What is a serving of alcohol?

Beer	12 ounces
Wine	5 ounces
Hard liquor	1.5 ounces

What is...	Moderate Drinking	At-Risk Drinking
<b>Men</b>	2 drinks/day	>4 drinks/day OR >14 drinks/week
<b>Women</b>	1 drink/day	>3 drinks/day OR >7 drinks/week

## Drink Smarter...Not Harder

- ◆ Eat a well-balanced meal before drinking. Alcohol lowers blood sugar levels which sends signals to the brain you are hungry, making you more inclined to eat. Eating before you go out will slow the rate at which alcohol is absorbed, keeping you in control of how much you eat and drink.
- ◆ Include an extra 30 minutes of exercise to burn additional calories instead of skipping a meal.
- ◆ Know your body's limits. Drink slowly and try to take a 30 minute break between drinks.
- ◆ Hydrate yourself throughout the night with water since alcohol causes dehydration.
- ◆ Alternate between alcoholic drinks and low-calorie, non-alcoholic drinks or water.
- ◆ Add soda/sparkling water to wine for a spritzer.
- ◆ Ask for low-calorie/diet mixers when possible.
- ◆ Limit or stay away from salty snack foods like chips, pretzels, and salted nuts. These make you thirsty and increase the likelihood you'll drink too much.

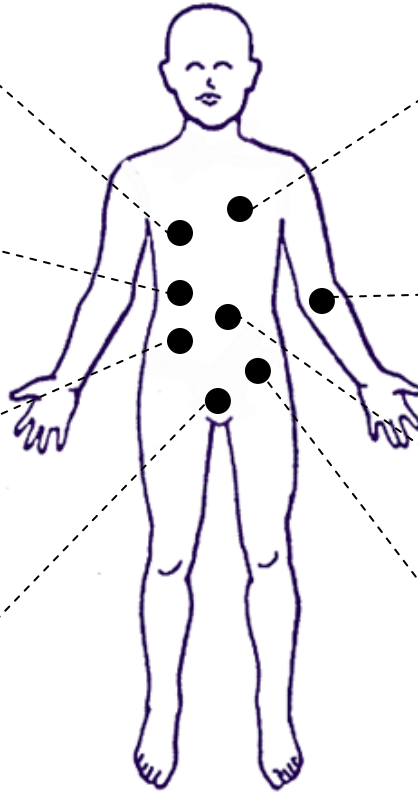
## Body Works: How Alcohol Affects Your Body

**Lungs**—alcohol depresses areas of the brain that control breathing. Excessive doses can lead to respiratory arrest.

**Kidneys**—alcohol interferes with the ability to absorb water. Causes urination and dehydration.

**Liver**—alcohol causes fat and lactic acid to accumulate, impairing the ability to metabolize sugar.

**Genitals**—alcohol interferes with normal production of hormones. For men and women, it makes it difficult to get aroused and have an orgasm. In men, can make it difficult to get and keep an erection.



**Heart**—low doses of alcohol can decrease blood pressure. Prolonged high doses lead to increases in blood pressure and risk for heart disease.

**Skin**—alcohol causes blood vessels near the surface to expand. This leads to heat loss and lower body temperature.

**Stomach**—alcohol stimulates secretion of hydrochloric acid, which irritates the stomach lining leading to nausea, vomiting, and heartburn.

**Pancreas**—alcohol causes secretion of too much insulin. The result is low blood sugar and low energy.

## Moderate Drinking



Tips to help you moderate your drinking and watch your waistline are to:

1. **Pace yourself.** It takes 30-45 minutes for the alcohol in a drink to hit you. Drink slowly to avoid sudden feelings of intoxication or from drinking too much.
2. **Alternate alcohol with water or other hydrating drinks.** Alcohol causes dehydration. To avoid a hangover and getting sick, drink at least one cup of water, or juice, for every alcoholic drink you have.
3. **Know your limit.** Alcohol affects everyone differently based factors like height, weight, and gender. So pay attention to how much you're drinking and know when to call it quits.
4. **Ditch the pre-game.** Throwing back a couple of drinks before heading to a party can be dangerous.
5. **Munch on munchies.** Food in your stomach slows the absorption of alcohol, preventing you from getting drunk too fast. Having a healthy meal before hitting the bars and munching on healthy snacks throughout the night can help you avoid drinking too much.
6. **Drink with low tolerance friends.** Just because your friend can drink more liquor than you doesn't mean you have to compete.
7. **Use the buddy system.** Make sure you're going out with friends who can keep an eye on you and make sure you're not drinking too much or putting yourself in a dangerous situation.
8. **Guard your drink.** To lower the risk of someone slipping a pill into your drink, never leave your drink unattended. Also, opt for bottled beer whenever possible and stay away from punch served in a bowl.