

DIABETES AND ALCOHOL

Alcohol can worsen some of the complications of diabetes. It prevents the liver from doing its job of regulating blood sugar and can also interact with some diabetes medications. Women metabolize alcohol more slowly than men do, which increases the risk of prolonged hypoglycemia.

DRINKING ALCOHOL RAISES THE RISK OF LOW BLOOD SUGAR FOR UP TO 24 HOURS BECAUSE IT

- Doesn't require insulin for metabolism
- Isn't converted to glucose; alcohol is mostly stored as fat (triglycerides)
- Takes the liver up to two hours to process less than 1 ounce of alcohol
- Enhances the effect of insulin and some diabetes medications
- Causes slight risk of high blood sugar followed hours later by low blood sugar

CONSUMING ALCOHOL MIGHT

- Increase weight, triglyceride levels and/or blood pressure
- Cause liver damage
- Make neuropathy worse

AVOID DRINKING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IF

- Driving
- Pregnant
- You have history of alcohol abuse
- Experiencing frequent hypoglycemic reactions
- Taking certain medications; check with a diabetes educator or pharmacist
- You have liver disease, pancreatitis, peptic ulcer/gastritis



Continued on the other side

DIABETES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

AMBULATORY CARE CENTER (ACC), SECOND FLOOR
55 LAKE AVENUE NORTH, WORCESTER, MA 01655

NEW PATIENTS: **855-UMASS-MD** (855-862-7763)

EXISTING PATIENTS: **508-334-3206**

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GUIDELINES AND TIPS

- Discuss alcohol intake with your physician or diabetes educator.
- Consume alcohol only if blood sugar control is good.
- Men: limit to two drinks* per day;
Women: limit to one drink* per day
- 65 or older: limit to one drink* per day
- Always drink with a meal or snack that contains carbohydrates.
- Avoid beverages with excess carbohydrates such as mixed drinks, coolers, sweet wines, etc.
- Use reduced-calorie mixers, including water, club soda, seltzer, diet soft drinks, diet tonic waters or tomato juice.
- Keep track of the alcohol you consume.
- Check blood sugars more often (e.g., before sleep, middle of the night).
- Learn your body's response to alcohol, especially if you rarely have a drink.
- Prepare for hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).
 - Glucagon shouldn't be used by people with Type 1 diabetes to treat hypoglycemia caused by alcohol consumption. The liver won't respond to glucagon while it continues to break down the alcohol in the body.
 - Consider a snack containing carbohydrates before going to sleep.
 - Drink with someone who knows how to treat a low blood sugar.
- Wear a medical ID because symptoms of low blood sugar and intoxication are similar.
- Don't exercise before consuming alcohol. Exercise increases insulin sensitivity, which can increase the risk of hypoglycemia.

*One serving contains 15 grams of alcohol.

SERVING SIZES, CALORIES AND CARBOHYDRATES

12 ounces beer = 5 ounces wine = 2 ounces dry sherry = 1.5 ounces distilled spirits

	RED WINE	WHITE WINE	REGULAR BEER	LITE BEER	NON-ALCOHOL BEER	LIQUOR 80 PROOF	LIQUOR 86 PROOF
SERVING (OUNCES)	5	5	12	12	12	1.5	1.5
CALORIES	106	100	146	99	70	97	105
CARBOHYDRATES (GRAMS)	2.5	1.2	13.2	4.6	14	0	0
ALCOHOL (GRAMS)	13.7	13.7	12.8	11.3	1	14	15

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