

## Alcohol and Nutrition

Guest Speaker: Deanna L. Walters; The Fontaine Center

- What does alcohol do to our bodies?
  - Enters blood stream
  - Is a depressant
  - Low doses cause a stimulant effect or “buzz”
  - Mental impairment
    - Higher brain order thinking- decision making and reaction time
  - Physical impairment
    - Depends on tolerance
    - Stumbling, impaired vision, slurred speech
  - Alcohol is metabolized by the liver
    - About 1 standard drink per hour
  - If high risk amounts are consumed, the body will need to recover even after the alcohol has left the body
    - hangover
- What is high risk?
  - Binge drinking
    - 4 drinks per day for women
    - 5 drinks per day for men
  - High risk drinking
    - Other factors that could result in health risks, impairment, or legal, social, or academic consequences
- Impact of High Risk Drinking:
  - Short term problems
    - Dehydration
    - Alcohol poisoning
    - Disrupted sleep patterns
  - Long term problems
    - Liver cirrhosis
    - Cancer
    - Heart disease
    - Hypertension
    - Alcoholism
    - Cognitive deterioration
    - Vitamin deficiencies
    - Digestive problems
    - Osteoporosis
- Alcohol and nutrition
  - Doesn't contain vitamins, minerals, or protein
  - Affects digestion, storage, utilization, and excretion
  - Inhibits the breakdown of nutrients into usable molecules
  - Can diminish the liver's ability to maintain stable blood sugar levels
  - Contains calories, but they are not converted into energy the same way nutritional food and drinks are
  - Impairs absorption by damaging the cells lining the stomach and intestines

- o Inhibits fat absorption- vitamins A, D, and E
- Nutrient deficiencies
  - o Can disrupt body functions by affecting parts of the body needed to metabolize nutrients
  - o When alcohol is metabolized by the liver, niacin, thiamine, and other B vitamins are used up
  - o Alcohol may deplete liver of all vitamin A stores
- Alcohol is a diuretic
  - o Increases output of urine
  - o Can cause body to lose water soluble minerals like Magnesium, Potassium, and Zinc
- Medical research
  - o Tells us that 1 or 2 standard drinks a day is not high risk for most people
    - 1 for women
    - 2 for men
  - o Possibly benefits heart health
- What is a standard drink?
  - o 12 ounces of beer (microbrewery)
  - o 4 ounces of wine
  - o 1.25 ounces of 80 proof liquor
  - o 1 ounce of 100 proof liquor
  - o EXAMPLE: one Long Island Iced Tea is equivalent to 5-7 standard drinks.
- Low risk guidelines
  - o ZERO alcohol if sick, using medicine, pregnant, underage, driving, or have a family history or alcoholism, etc.
  - o ONE drink per hour to metabolize
  - o THREE standard drinks per day MAX
- Individual impairment factors
  - o Gender
    - Women have less of the enzyme needed to metabolize alcohol
  - o Body size/body fluid
  - o Empty stomach
  - o Illness/tiredness
  - o Drugs/medication
  - o Birth control pill or menstruation
  - o Mood and expectations
- Influences
  - o Friends/peers
  - o Parents
  - o Culture
  - o Society
  - o Media
- Perceptions influence behavior
  - o The biggest predictor of alcohol consumption among college students is the perception of what their peers are doing
  - o Overestimations of how much and how often people are drinking
- Alcohol at UGA

- o "top party school" according to Princeton Review
- o Data tells us:
  - Most UGA students make low risk decisions most of the time
  - On average, most UGA students make less risky decisions about alcohol than other students around the nation
- How to lower risk
  - o Count drinks to keep track
  - o Limit number per outing
  - o Pace drinks to one an hour
  - o Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
  - o Avoid drinking games
  - o Only drink with trusted friends
- ABCDs for an alcohol emergency
  - o Arouse-turn on side if unconscious
  - o Breathing- get help if victim is taking less than 8 breaths per minute
  - o Color- get help if victim is pale, cold, clammy, or had a blue tint to skin
  - o Discuss- share your concerns with the victim after the emergency is over