



NATURAL
HYDRATION
COUNCIL

Hangover vs. Hydration or Partying without Pain

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Christmas is a time of indulgence, when many of us increase our alcohol intake considerably. While the parties may be fun, the resulting hangover is far less enjoyable, particularly if yours is accompanied by nausea, headache and fatigue.

As well as making us feel rotten and grouchy, hangovers can also inhibit our mental and physical performance, causing our productivity and efficiency at work to take a dive the morning after the night before. And obviously there can also be longer term health implications.



What causes a hangover?

Although the symptoms of hangovers are well known, the causes are not. In the past, dehydration was thought to be the main cause of alcohol hangover symptoms.¹

Now, scientists believe that alcohol withdrawal and chemicals formed in the body when our livers break down alcohol also contribute to those dreaded symptoms.²



Partying without Pain

So how can we enjoy the Christmas season without facing consequences at home or at work? A few simple changes in beverage habits can make imbibing a bit of 'Christmas spirit' less of a risky business!

1. Never drink on an empty stomach. Eat a meal before you go out and snack later in the evening between drinks.
2. Stay well hydrated during the day to prepare for your night out. Having a bottle of water at hand is a great way to rehydrate on the move.
3. Don't drink alcohol because you feel thirsty! Quench your thirst with a refreshing glass of water or a fruit juice before you have an alcoholic drink.
4. Avoid drinking from large wine glasses, as these can mislead you about how much alcohol you have consumed.
5. Women generally tolerate alcohol less well than men, so the safe alcohol limit is lower for women (2-3 units/day) than for men (3-4 units/day). Visit <http://units.nhs.uk/unitCalculator.html> for more information.
6. Calories in alcoholic drinks and mixers soon add up (see table below). Alternate between a glass of water and an alcoholic drink to help limit calories and dodge a hangover.
7. Be aware that clear alcoholic drinks produce fewer hangover-inducing chemicals in your body when broken down than darker coloured drinks.
8. At the end of the evening keep a bottle of water by your bed to drink whenever you feel thirsty.
9. Designate a non drinking driver for the evening.



Hidden calories in alcohol drinks³



Beverages	Energy (Kcal/100ml)*
Cream liqueurs	325
Premium beer	59
Port	157
Red wine	68
Sherry	116
Spirits (40% volume)	222
Vermouth (sweet)	151
White wine	74
Champagne	80
Sparkling water	0
Still water	0

*Remember that a pint is about 500ml and a standard glass of wine about 200ml.

Check out these websites

Natural Hydration Council

<http://www.naturalhydrationcouncil.org.uk>

Drinking and You

<http://www.drinkingandyou.com/site/uk/what.htm>

Drinkaware

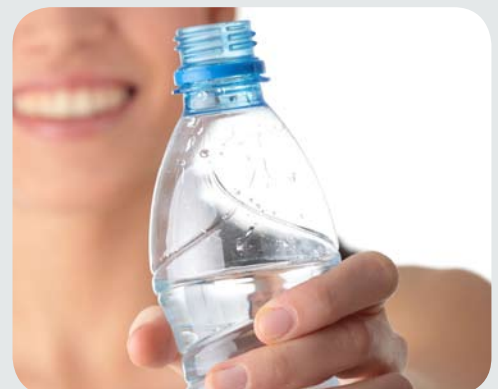
<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk>

NHS unit calculator

<http://units.nhs.uk/unitCalculator.html>

BUPA sensible drinking

http://hcd2.bupa.co.uk/fact_sheets/html/alcohol_abuse.html#1



References

1. Verster JC (2008) The alcohol hangover – a puzzling phenomenon. *Alcohol & Alcoholism* 43, 124-126.
2. Prat G et al. (2009) Alcohol hangover: a critical review of explanatory factors. *Human Psychopharmacology* 24, 259-267.
3. FSA (Food Standards Agency) (2006) McCance and Widdowson's, the Composition of Foods. 6th Edition. Royal Society of Chemistry: London.