

the RED CUP Q&A

separating alcohol fact from fiction

wildfact

1 in 2 UA students set a limit on the number of drinks they will have before they go out.
(2016 Health & Wellness Survey, n=3,113)

What are the best drinks to make your night fun and enjoyable?

As you may suspect, the types of drinks you choose can make a big difference in whether you have a fun and enjoyable night, or one filled with regrets. Those drink choices also have a way of spilling over into how you feel the next day, too. And while the actual ethanol is the same in whatever alcoholic concoction you choose, it's the dosage that can vary – by a lot.

Our advice? Stick to drinks with a lower percentage of alcohol (also called ABV or alcohol by volume), which allow you to drink (and absorb) alcohol at a slower rate, thereby keeping your social buzz longer. Shots of hard alcohol, such as vodka, gin, or whiskey, go down fast and raise your blood alcohol content (BAC) faster.

The problem is, it's all too easy to throw down a few of those before your body even has a chance to give you the "signal" that you just had too much, too fast. Once you cross that line, you're less likely to be enjoying the party and more likely to be hugging it out with the porcelain god on the bathroom floor.

If a fun night out is your goal, here are four tips to live by:

Drink beer – it typically has a lower alcohol content (usually around 5% ABV) than other drinks, and allows you to pace yourself over the course of the evening. Don't like the taste? Hard ciders have about the same ABV as beer.

DIY – if you choose mixed drinks, make them yourself so you can limit the alcohol content to keep the party going. Fill up your red cup with mixer (soda, OJ, etc.) and add a 1 oz. shot (or less) of the hard stuff as a rule of thumb.

Hydrate – water may just be the secret sauce you are looking for. Drinking it gives your liver a break from having to metabolize more alcohol. It also helps fend off hangovers and headaches the next day.

Skip the shots – sorry, but hard alcohol can kill a social buzz faster than just about any party foul. When you hear the chorus chanting "shot", let that be your cue to smoothly step out to explore the rest of party. Your fun and enjoyable night out may depend on it.

Got a question about alcohol? Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



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