

the

RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction

Q Will alcohol affect my workouts and athletic performance?

A. Every athlete knows that optimal performance is a combination of dedicated training, workouts, and being on the top of your game mentally and physically. Both workout enthusiasts and student athletes will experience diminished athletic performance from alcohol abuse.

Even a few drinks can overturn the intention of your hard workouts, reducing your endurance and compromising your mental strategies. Consuming five or more alcoholic beverages in one night can affect brain and body activities for up to three days. That party you attend on Saturday can affect your game on Tuesday.

Here's why: Alcohol significantly reduces Humane Growth Hormone and testosterone, which are essential in building and repairing muscles. ATP, our primary energy source necessary for efficient muscle contraction, is also lowered.

The body treats alcohol as a fat and it disrupts the Krebs cycle – leading to body fat accumulation. Alcohol also impairs protein synthesis – a lot – by blocking absorption of important nutrients and contributing to dehydration. Alcohol also interferes with lactic acid breakdown and can result in increased soreness after exercise.

Regular alcohol consumption lowers immune function, increases swelling upon injury, and contributes to delayed healing.

Alcohol reduces your ability for learning and remembering new strategies and plays. Combining that with decreased hormone levels and poor recovery due to disturbance of REM sleep, athletes can expect poorer agility, reaction time, and stamina. Athletes who drink alcohol have an increased risk of injury.

Studies by the American Athletic Institute (AAI) reveal that drinking to intoxication can negate as much as 14 days of training effect. The residual effect of an alcoholic hangover alone decreases athletic performance by 11.4%.

So, if you are an athlete who is determined to drink, drink moderately and take multi-vitamins daily. Match your alcohol intake with at least the same amount of water and drink at least 32 ounces of water before sleeping.

Finally, if competition is important to you, you'll likely find inspiration in this quote, *"Remember when you are partying, that somewhere, someone is training... and when you meet them, they will beat you."*



wildfact

On Thanksgiving Day, 1899, UA played its first intercollegiate game.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

The Red Cup Q&A is written by Lynn Reyes, LCSW, LISAC, David Salafsky, MPH, Lee Ann Hamilton, MA, CHES, Spencer Gorin, RN, Christiana Castillo, MPH, and Kaye Godbey, MSHSA in the Health Promotion and Preventive Services (HPPS) department of the UA Campus Health Service.