

The wise woman's guide to booze

Before you crack open the cocktail menu, learn the happier, better-for-you way to drink.

BY DIANA VILIBERT

FIRST, KNOW THIS

Experts say women can have up to seven drinks per week, and as many as three in a day—just remember that's a limit, not a challenge, since too much alcohol can be toxic. Even so, by the time you reach your 30s and 40s, you may find you don't even want that much. The enzymes that help metabolize alcohol slow down as we grow older, which can bring on a hangover more quickly. Other reasons you might be feeling the alcohol more than you used to: You may be more susceptible to dehydration than you were at 21. Our bodies have more fat and less water than when we were younger, which changes the way alcohol is absorbed. Also, if you take any medications, your liver has to work overtime to break down those *and* the sangria. So if your go-to drink order has you feeling more topsy-turvy than tipsy these days, know that you're in good (if somewhat nauseous) company.

WHAT TO ORDER

Be smart about your drink choice and your body will thank you.

WINE Red is always best: It's a good source of heart-healthy resveratrol. But whether you're having red or a slightly less antioxidant-rich wine like white or rosé, be aware that a proper 5-ounce serving is less than half of most wineglasses.

BEER Each 12-ounce serving is surprisingly filled with nutrients like vitamins B₆ and B₁₂ and folic acid, and beer won't leave you feeling tipsy as quickly as wine or spirits will—but it's also higher in calories. So go for light beer. If you bloat, skip beer altogether: Carbonation can mean gas.

SPIRITS Order clear liquor—darker spirits like bourbon contain more congeners, chemicals left over from the distilling process that can worsen hangovers. Stick with one or two 1.5-ounce servings, and be wary of diet mixers: Unlike real sugar, artificial sweeteners don't slow the absorption of alcohol, so you'll feel the effects sooner.

PREVENT A HANGOVER

Three ways to ease the aches:

EAT PROTEIN It's even more effective than carbs at slowing your body's absorption of alcohol (so

you'll have to come up with another excuse to have a second piece of bread—you're resourceful). Pair your drink with a lean protein like chicken, turkey, or fish, whether you're ordering dinner or grabbing apps from a tray.

DRINK CHICKEN BROTH Really! Have a cup when you wake up the next morning. Drinking robs your body of electrolytes like salt and potassium (both found in broth) that are essential to muscle and nerve function. Too little of either and you may feel headache-y and nauseous.

DO YOGA It strengthens your parasympathetic nervous system, which is crucial to a good night's sleep but is suppressed by drinking. Try slipping into yoga pants a few times a week—10 minutes of downward dog before happy hour probably isn't enough—and raise a glass to feeling *great*.



SOURCES:

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