

Nutrition Bites

Nutrition Bite Week 8 – Alcohol

This week the focus is on alcohol. Alcohol in **moderation** can be enjoyed as part of a healthy diet.

The **maximum** recommended intake of alcohol is:

Men – 21 standard drinks per week

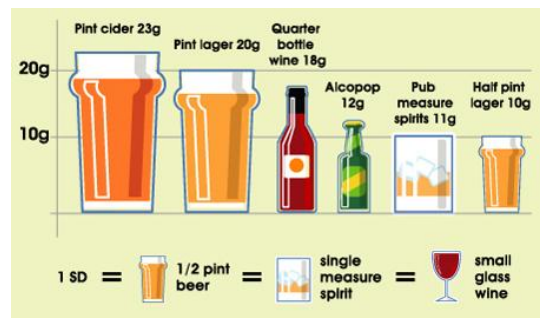
Women – 14 standard drinks per week

This is not a target to aim for! It is a maximum limit that is regarded safe for your health. However, if you are trying to lose weight you should aim to reduce this as much as you can.

What is a standard drink?

- Half pint of beer or lager
- A small glass wine (125mls)
- An alcopop
- A pub measure of spirits (37.5mls) is 1 ½ units)

A standard drink in Ireland contains 10g of pure alcohol. Take a look at the picture below to see how much alcohol is in a typical drink e.g. pint cider contains 23g alcohol.



Alcohol is high in calories and also makes you more hungry. If you don't want to be calling into the local chippy on the way home from the pub, then be careful how much you drink!

The Hidden Calories in Alcohol

<u>Alcohol</u>	<u>Calories</u>
1 measure spirits	78
1 glass dry white wine (170mls)	119
1 glass red wine (170mls)	122
1 pint lager	167
1 pint cider	208
1 pint Guinness	210
Smirnoff Ice (330mls)	225

Consider what you drink on an average weekend.....

As well as being full of empty calories, a high alcohol intake can also increase blood pressure, can increase triglyceride levels and can damage your liver. Alcohol is also a diuretic, which means it will promote dehydration which may impair performance and training.

Healthy Tips

- If you do drink, spread your drinking over the week and have some alcohol free days.
- Enjoy alcohol with meals where possible. Have something to eat before you go out. Even a quick snack is better than having an empty stomach.
- Be careful home measures! When pouring spirits at home, how often do you use a measure? People often end up pouring a double or triple!
- Don't store up all your units for a Saturday night! Binge drinking is more likely to cause damage over time. It is safer to drink moderately.
- Choose diet mixers or slimline tonic for spirits.
- A bottle of wine contains an average of 10 standard drinks. Switch to white wine spritzers instead (small glass wine mixed with soda water or sparkling water).
- In diabetics, alcohol can lower blood sugar levels, this can happen even several hours after drinking. It is important to check your blood sugar levels and have a starchy snack after drinking alcohol to avoid a 'hypo'.
- Low alcohol beers and wines tend to be higher in sugar than ordinary ones and are best avoided.
- Sip drinks slowly or skip a round.
- Avoid temptation to snack on salty snacks when drinking e.g. crisps, peanuts as they are high in fat, as well as salt.
- You may well be confused about articles in the media. Some say that 1-2 units of alcohol per day **may** provide some protection against heart disease. But it is **not recommended** that those who don't drink **to start drinking for health!**

Next week we turn our attention to your water and fluid requirements. Good luck with your training!