

DRY ~~JANUARY~~ ANY MONTH

A liver doctor's guide

An easy-to-understand
breakdown of the effects of
alcohol on your health



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Ditch the Drinks

Your liver will thank you!

Want to hit the reset button on your health? Join the **Dry January** **Any Month** movement!

We all know overdoing it on the booze can leave you feeling rough. But even moderate drinking can have sneaky effects on your body, especially your liver—your body's detox champ.

This guide is here to break down why Dry Any Month might be your new best friend, and how to crush it!



TheLiverInstituteTX.com



Why Dry (any month!) matters



BOOST YOUR ENERGY & SLEEP

Say goodbye to hangovers and hello to clearer mornings and sharper focus.



SAVE MONEY

Drinks can be pricey! A dry month can be a budget win.



LOOK AND FEEL YOUR BEST

Ditch the bloat and welcome a brighter complexion and more energy for workouts.



REDUCE YOUR RISK

Heavy drinking can lead to serious health problems down the line. A dry month is a chance to give your liver a break.

The science behind it:

Your liver is constantly working to filter out toxins, including alcohol. Excess booze can overwhelm it, leading to problems like fatty liver disease and even cirrhosis. Taking a break from alcohol gives your liver a chance to heal and function at its best.

So what happens when you give up alcohol?

WEEK 1:

You might experience some cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Don't worry, they'll pass!

WEEK 2:

You'll likely notice an improvement in your sleep and energy levels.

WEEK 3 AND 4:

Feeling sharper and more focused? You're on the right track! Your skin might also be looking clearer.

Conquering your dry month

FIND YOUR MOCKTAIL MAGIC: Experiment with delicious nonalcoholic drinks. Sparkling water with fruit slices, fancy mocktails, and even kombucha can satisfy your social cravings.

PREP YOUR FRIDGE: Stock up on healthy alternatives to keep cravings at bay. Think sparkling water, fruit-infused water, or a fancy tea.

BUDDY UP: Find a friend to do Dry Any Month with you for extra motivation!

BE A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY: Going out doesn't have to involve booze. Hit the dance floor with a mocktail in hand or try a new activity like bowling or rock climbing.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS: Use an app like Try Dry to monitor your progress and see how much money you're saving.



A slip-up? No sweat!

We all have moments. Don't let one slip-up derail your progress. Just pick yourself up and get back on track the next day.

Ready to give Dry Any Month a shot?

This is your chance to feel your best and give your liver a high-five!

Let's be real,

Drinking is a big part of our social life

But even before the pandemic, alcohol use was on the rise, with a quarter of adults reporting heavy drinking.

Heavy Drinking Formula

5+ drinks a day for guys

4+ drinks a day for gals



What's considered a drink?



Each drink shown above represents one U.S. standard drink and has an equivalent amount (0.6 fluid ounces) of "pure" ethanol.

You might've heard that a glass of wine is "good for the heart," but newer research is throwing shade on that idea. Turns out, any amount of alcohol might not be so great. The good news? Taking a month off can make a real difference.

Studies show that going dry for 30 days leads to better sleep, more energy, weight loss, and improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol, and even some cancer-related markers.

Heads-up, ladies

Alcohol affects us differently

Research shows women are more susceptible to alcohol-related problems than men, both short term (like blackouts) and long term (like liver and heart disease).

Why? There are several biological factors at play, but one is that women's bodies have less water content than men's, meaning the same amount of alcohol leads to a higher blood alcohol content in women. Basically, women get drunker faster than men.

The bottom line is this: Women experience alcohol-related issues sooner and with less alcohol than men, and this includes an increased risk of breast cancer.

The NEW pandemic

During and after COVID

Remember those early pandemic days? Yeah, a lot of us were coping with a glass (or bottle) of wine. Turns out, that wasn't just us — COVID-19 pandemic led to the biggest jump in alcohol consumption we've seen in half a century. And obviously, that meant more alcohol-related health problems.

But here's the thing:

Even before all the lockdowns and stress, drinking was already becoming more common. And let's be honest, social media plays a huge role. Between "wine down Wednesday" and all those "mom juice" memes, it's like drinking is constantly being pushed in our faces.

How alcohol affects the body

Brain

Interferes with the parts of the brain responsible for memory and communication. Alcohol can produce memory impairments after only a few drinks, and as the amount of alcohol increases, so does the degree of impairment. These changes can potentially lead to permanent memory issues.

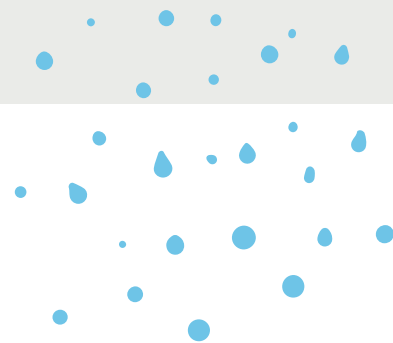
Psychiatric

Alcohol may also be a contributing factor to mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and antisocial personality disorder.

Heart

When the liver is unable to keep up with the rate of alcohol in the bloodstream, that alcohol-contaminated blood gets pumped through the heart. Over time, this can lead to numerous heart problems.

Long term, excessive drinking is one of the main causes of heart disease. Alcohol is a contributing factor to cardiomyopathy (a stretching and weakening of the heart), arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats), stroke, and high blood pressure.



How alcohol affects the body

Liver

Heavy amounts of alcohol over a long period of time can cause inflammation and scarring of the liver. When the liver suffers scarring, that means it will no longer be able to operate at full capacity.

Some of the potential liver conditions that can develop include fatty liver disease, alcoholic hepatitis, liver fibrosis, liver cancer, and cirrhosis.

Pancreas

- The pancreas is an essential organ in the body as it creates hormones that help break down sugar in the bloodstream (insulin and glucagon).
- Long-term alcohol consumption can cause a potentially fatal inflammation of the pancreas.
- Also, by-products of alcohol metabolism within the pancreas may damage cell membranes, leading to further inflammation.

Stomach

- Alcohol causes the stomach to produce more acid than usual, which leads to various conditions such as acid reflux and inflammation of the stomach lining (also called gastritis).
- Other various digestive issues caused by alcohol include nausea, vomiting, ulcers, internal bleeding, and diarrhea.
- As mentioned before, any part of the body that comes in direct contact with alcohol are at an increased risk of cancer over time.
- Since alcohol sits in the stomach for a period of time before being digested or absorbed into the bloodstream, people with long-term alcohol use disorder are at a much-increased risk for stomach cancer.

Waistline

Even if an alcohol is sugar-free or low-calorie, it acts like a sugar magnet, it acts like a sugar magnet, making you crave unhealthy foods. The result? Weight gain.

Kidneys

- Along with the liver, the kidneys are responsible for filtering toxins from the blood.
- Over time, severe alcohol use disease can cause the liver to no longer operate as it should. This leaves much of the blood-filtering duties to the kidneys.
- Overworked kidneys can lead to kidney disease and damage.
- Long-term heavy drinking also causes high blood pressure, which can also damage the kidneys.

Appearance

Forget that “healthy glow.” Alcohol dehydrates your skin, making it look dull and tired. Plus, it dilates blood vessels, leading to those unattractive red spider veins on your face. Not exactly a good look.



Tips for success

Find a substitute nonalcoholic drink

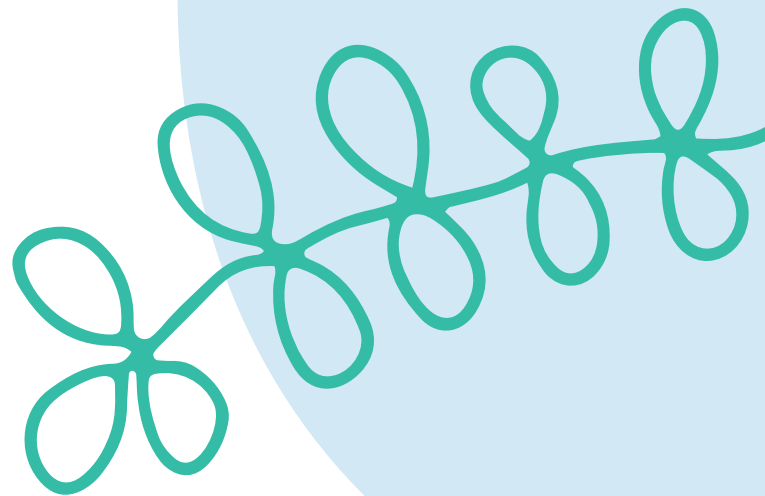
For social situations, or when you crave a cocktail after a long day, reach for alcohol-free beverages like sparkling water, soda, or mocktails (nonalcoholic cocktails.)

Avoid temptations

Keep alcohol out of your house. When you are invited to someone's home, bring nonalcoholic drinks with you.

Create a support group

Let friends and family know about your intentions, and encourage them to keep you accountable. Better yet, enlist someone to do the challenge with you.



Use the Try Dry app

This free app from the UK helps you track your drinking and set personal goals, and it offers motivational information like calories and money saved from not drinking. It's aimed at cutting back on or cutting out alcohol, depending on your choices.
rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/



DON'T GIVE UP

If you slip up, don't feel guilty. Just begin again the next day.



Learn more: TheLiverInstituteTX.com

Questions?

Email mdmc_transplant@mhd.com

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