

Avoiding a hangover

How can I avoid a hangover after a night of drinking?

One of the best ways to minimize the symptoms of a hangover — headaches, nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, dehydration, and body aches — is to practice some prevention before and during your drinking episodes. Here are some popular tips on how to do just that:

Drink for the right reasons. Social occasions and celebrations are pretty good reasons for having a drink. Reducing stress, releasing anger, or trying to prove something to someone are unhealthy motivations for alcohol consumption and may actually quicken the intoxication process.

Hold that line. Know your tolerance of alcoholic beverages (the point when the alcohol you've consumed begins to cause noticeable physical and psychological changes). Set and state a drink max before you go out.

Pace yourself. One drink per hour (12 oz. beer, four to five oz. of wine, or one to 1.5 oz. of hard liquor) is recommended to prevent negative experiences. This rate gives your body a chance to process the alcohol without sending it special delivery to your head. Try to limit yourself to three or four drinks in a 24-hour period and not more than once or twice a week.

Mix, not! Avoid alternating the types of alcohol you consume. If you begin with beer, stick with beer. Starting with Scotch? Stay with Scotch, and so on.

Consider the congeners. Congeners are natural by-products of alcohol fermentation. The higher the congener content, the greater the hangover. Gin and vodka have the fewest congeners, while bourbon and red wine claim the most.

Chow down. Eat before or during drinking. Nibbling on finger foods throughout the night may also slow the intoxication process.

Alternate. Start your partying with some food, then have a beer, then down some water or juice before having another beer (remember to pace yourself along the way). Avoid switching off with carbonated drinks — they may heighten hangovers.

Sip or sink. Drink each alcoholic beverage slowly. Remember, your liver can only handle about one serving of alcohol an hour (12 oz. beer, four to five oz. of wine, or one to 1.5 oz. of hard liquor).

Online & Off-Campus Resources	On-Campus Resources
<p>Go Ask Alice! – www.goaskalice.columbia.edu</p> <p>Online Anonymous Alcohol Self Assessment – www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol</p> <p>Addiction Services Helpline – 877-8 HOPE NY</p> <p>NYC Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Hygiene – 800-LIFENET (available 24 hours a day)</p>	<p>After Hours Clinician On Call – 212-854-9797</p> <p>BASICS – www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol or 212-854-5453</p> <p>Columbia Health – www.health.columbia.edu</p> <p>CU-EMS – 212-854-5555</p> <p>Public Safety – 212-854-5555 (or x99 from a campus phone)</p>

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