

# How much alcohol is in your drink?

By Jenna Solomon

It's the time of year when festivities bring opportunities for drinking holiday spirits. To stay safe, it's important to know how much alcohol you are consuming.

Some people should not drink alcohol at all, including people who are younger than 21, people who are pregnant, people with certain health conditions and people taking medications that can interact with alcohol. People in recovery from alcohol use disorder should not drink.

Adults who choose to drink should be aware that alcohol content varies a lot. Undistilled alcoholic beverages – beers, wines, hard seltzers and malt liquors – have alcohol content ranging from 4% to 15% alcohol by volume (ABV). Distilled beverages like vodka, whiskey, rum and tequila have an average alcohol content ranging from 30% to 60%.

U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend moderation in drinking. For women, that means drinking up to one standard drink per day. For men, moderation means consuming up to two standard drinks per day. What is a standard drink?

- 12 ounces of beer, or one bottle at 5% ABV. A 12-ounce craft beer is actually 1.5 servings of alcohol.
- 8 ounces of malt liquor or flavored malt beverage at 7% ABV
- 5 ounces of wine at 12% ABV
- 1.5 ounces of hard liquor, or one shot, at 40% ABV

Here are some tips for preventing alcohol overconsumption and DUI:

**Know what you are drinking.** Since alcoholic drinks have a wide range of alcohol content, stay informed about the types of alcohol you're consuming and how much. Medication, genetics and medical conditions may vary your reaction to alcohol consumption.

**Have a designated driver to drive you safely home.** Provide your designated driver with nonalcoholic beverages. Be prepared to use Uber, Lyft or a taxi to make sure you get home safely. Do not get in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

**Drink water or another nonalcoholic beverage in between drinks.** Pace yourself and stay hydrated. Everybody is different, as is the response to alcohol. Don't feel the need to "keep up" with other drinkers. Don't be embarrassed if you've had too much to drink and need to ask for a ride home. If you think you may have trouble limiting your alcohol intake, consider speaking with a healthcare provider about how this may affect your well-being.

**Be a good host.** Provide activities or games that involve everyone so your guests can focus on having fun instead of drinking. Encourage your friends to invite their kids. Adults tend to model good behaviors in front of children and drink less. Serve food, so that your guests are not drinking on an empty stomach. On your invitation, request that guests decide on a designated sober driver in advance. Be prepared for guests to sleep overnight if they cannot safely get home.

Enjoy your holidays by staying safe. Drive only when you are sober, alert and buckled up.

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