



“Eat, Drink,” and Be Careful

Although this may be the season to “Eat, Drink and Be Merry”, be sure to exercise portion control in all you do, especially the *drinking* part.

Many people believe that a 12-ounce can of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce wine cooler and an ounce-and-a-half of liquor contain the same amount of alcohol. That’s not necessarily the case. In fact, some beers may contain up to 10 percent alcohol. People may be accustomed to drinking “light” beers, which are 4 to 5 percent alcohol. Tasty liqueurs can easily contain 40 to 50 percent alcohol--and they don’t even taste like liquor! When you read the label on alcoholic products, the alcoholic content is half of the proof number.



Just having a splash of liquor in that glass? Carbonated mixers, including club soda or tonic water, can cause alcohol to be absorbed in to a person’s system more quickly.

Whiskey, Scotch, or other 80 proof (40 percent alcohol) distilled liquors add 103 calories per jigger, while rum and some other liquors and spirits, also 80 proof (40 percent alcohol), add 97 calories per jigger. Many drinks contain more than a simple jigger of alcohol.

If your family tradition is to serve eggnog, be sure your recipe calls for using pasteurized eggs, egg substitute, or one of the containers of pasteurized eggnog found in the dairy department of your grocery store. An 8-ounce glass of non-alcoholic eggnog, made with whole milk, has 342 calories. Therefore, you will want to read the label on that eggnog container. Even a low-fat version has 150 calories for a mere *half cup*. Most old-fashion (smaller) glasses hold a *whole* cup, making that ‘skinny’ eggnog worth 300 calories. Conversely, two other brands of eggnog in local stores had 210 and 230 calories for a half cup (translating to 420 and 460 calories if you drink a *whole* glass of it.) Add the alcohol, and you have added even *more* calories!

Whiphahols (whipped cream infused with alcohol) contain 15 – 18 percent alcohol and are available at Wyoming liquor stores. Be careful to keep that aerosol can out of the reach of little ones and anyone adversely affected by alcohol.

Another reason to exercise portion control when drinking alcohol is that alcohol is a depressant. If you are taking medications that cause drowsiness, this symptom can be increased up to ten times. Alcohol can interact with many medications in unexpected ways.

Newly released data that looks at the drinking patterns of more than 200,000 criminal offenders monitored 24/7 for alcohol consumption showed that, even when Big Brother is watching, drinking increases nearly 27 percent between Thanksgiving and January 2.

What can you do instead of over imbibing? First, you can avoid making alcohol the main focus of social events. Other suggestions are to: Entertain guests with music, dancing, games, food and lively conversation; stop serving drinks at least one hour before the end of the event. That would be a good time to bring out the coffee, more non-alcoholic beverages and desserts; if you do drink, switch between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and keep track of how many alcoholic ones you have consumed; and pace yourself to one drink or less per hour.

If you choose a mocha-flavored coffee drink, you can easily add 400 – 500 calories to your diet. That's the number of calories many people consume at one meal. If you are a person that needs your coffee drink, consider asking for fat-free milk, and no whipped cream. This could shave 200 calories from the drink, making it a more reasonable choice.

Research shows that one in three adults actually prefers a non-alcoholic beverage. Make sure to have plenty of sparkling water, fancy juice drinks, soda and bottled drinking water on hand for them. Check the label to make sure they aren't calorie-laden.

According to *Science News*, the foods providing the most calories in the American diet are soda and fruit drinks. Adults are getting an average of 14 percent of their calories from soda and fruit drinks containing less than 10 per cent juice. When you drink your second bottle of soda in a day you are increasing your intake to 32 teaspoons (almost $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) of sugar and 500 calories!

Egg Nog

1 part pasteurized egg substitute

2 parts non-fat evaporated milk

1 Tablespoon per quart

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup powdered sugar/quart (or to taste)

Refrigerate overnight or for several hours; garnish with nutmeg.

Source: Christine Pasley, Non-Alcoholic Holiday Drink Recipes,



1995.

It takes 3,500 calories to add one pound of body weight. Adding that extra calorie-laden beverage to your diet during the holiday season can really add pounds. It only takes about 7 days to pack on an extra pound if you merely consume an additional 500 calories a day!

Yes, this may be the season to “Eat, Drink and Be Merry”, but do so in moderation to keep from going to “waist!”

For more information on “Living Well in Wyoming”, contact your University of Wyoming Extension Nutrition and Food Safety Educator!

Sources:

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