

## How to Know if You Have an Alcohol Addiction

by Sandra Kim Leong

Many turn to alcohol for various reasons. Yet few do so with regard that alcohol drunk in huge quantities can cause tremendous harm and damage to your internal organs such as liver and stomach. Alcohol is toxins and can cause liver-related diseases as well as varicose-like veins in the stomach's lining, which can rupture any second. Once it does, internal bleeding occurs, resulting in many complications.

Headache and nausea are immediate effects when you drink alcohol excessively. Your mental clarity gets affected and you begin to feel dizzy. On a longer term basis, having too much alcohol can also cause your skin to look sallow.

It is best to seek help and support for an alcohol addiction. You first need to acknowledge that you have reached a point whereby you cannot do without alcohol. Here is some warning signs that you need to pay attention to, in order to determine if you are addicted to alcohol or are just a social drinker:

- Are you turning more and more to alcohol for solace or running away from your other problems? The feeling of wanting to belong and be socially accepted is common. Drinking alcohol can make you feel that you on top of the world and create a feeling that you are accepted by your friends and society. Or you may be facing stress at work or having some financial problems. You turn to drinking to temporarily help you forget your woes. What you forget is that the effects of being



drunk and alcoholic can be more detrimental than beneficial.

- Are you taking time off from work just to drink? If you are, you may be addicted to alcohol. Alcoholics tend to disregard the future consequences of what they do. They lose their motivation and have no focus in their jobs and careers.

- Are your drinking sprees causing you rifts with family members? Your family members are likely to be the first ones who notice about your drinking habits. They start to raise concerns but you do not really want to hear them nagging away. Alcoholics become so addicted to their drinks that they often fail to see that their family members really want the best for them.

- Do you want to drink the very next morning after a night out in the bar? An obvious sign of being addicted to alcohol is if you always think about having a glass of whiskey at any time of the day. Or maybe you have a regular 11:00 pm nightcap and cannot sleep without it. If you are indeed experiencing these, talk to a trusted health professional. It may well be the start of a dangerous alcohol addiction.

Studies have shown that a relapse is more likely when you have traces of alcohol in your body. You will need to undergo an alcohol detoxification program to thoroughly cleanse yourself of these traces. Liver cleansing can also help you reduce the chance of developing liver failure or other liver related problems.

Detoxification can lessen the harm that toxins cause to your body. Get free tips and special reports by Sandra Kim Leong on detox cleansing here on this site at <http://www.detox-cleansing-diet.com>

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## From the Coach's Playbook:

### The positive and negative effects of alcohol consumption

Many wellness clients will often ask how much alcohol consumption is considered normal and/or excessive, and what the positive and negative health effects are. In the spirit of National Alcohol Awareness Month, I figured this was a good time to address these questions.

Heavy (or excessive) drinking is consumption of more than 1 drink/day on average for women, and more than 2 drinks/day on average for men. Binge drinking is also considered heavy drinking, which is consumption of 4 or more drinks on a single occasion for women, and 5 or more on a single occasion for men. A serving of alcohol is approximately 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. This is roughly the equivalent of 5 ounces of wine, 8 ounces of malt liquor, 12 ounces of beer or wine cooler, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits or liquor (such as gin, vodka, rum, whiskey, etc.).

Regarding the positive effects of alcohol consumption, there is research that suggests that moderate consumption (i.e. not excessive) of alcohol may protect against cardiovascular disease by thinning the blood, slightly in-



creasing HDL (or "good") cholesterol, and/or reducing stress levels. However, much of the evidence points to the flavonoids and antioxidants found in wine, which are chemicals already found in abundance in red grape juice, fruits, and vegetables.

As for the negative effects of alcohol consumption, they are unfortunately plentiful. First, alcohol consumption leads to greater amounts of unintentional injuries (such as automobile accidents, falls, drowning, burns, and firearm injuries), increases the risk of violent behavior (such as child, spouse, and pet abuse), and increases risk of risky sexual behaviors, miscarriage, stillbirth, and alcohol poisoning. Also, it can lead to weight gain due to its high caloric content, and can lead to the development of neurological problems, cardiovascular disease, psychiatric problems, social problems, cancer, gastrointestinal disease, and liver disease.

The take home message is that the negatives still greatly outweigh the positives, and experts agree that more research is needed on the topic of the health benefits of moderate alcohol consumption. If you suspect that you may have a drinking problem, please contact us and take advantage of your EAP benefit.

- M. Scott Stanley, MS

## National Humor Month

Did you know that laughter has a number of positive health benefits? First, laughter produces a high level of endorphins, which are your body's natural pain killers. These are the same chemicals that give you the "runner's high" or make you feel a bit euphoric when you laugh good and hard. Second, there is evidence that laughter increases the production of immunoglobulins and T-cells which boost the immune system against infection and illness. Third, laughter has been shown to decrease blood pressure, which can protect the heart from disease. Finally, evidence shows that laughter may decrease those nasty stress hormones that kick in in our "fight or flight" response and wreak havoc on the body. So next time someone says "laughter is the best medicine," you will be able to tell them exactly why!

When you need help, call Symmetry Wellness at 1.800.422.5338 or 419.475.5338. It's free and confidential.