

The Effects of Alcohol on Blood Sugar

A typical lunch/dinner will have elements of food and drink. And for some people that drink may be alcohol.

But what if you're diabetic? Should you be conscious of alcohol intake or should you not have any at all?

Let's get down to the nitty-gritty.

One of the functions of the liver is to release a steady stream of glucose to the bloodstream. Glucose is the primary source of energy that ensures body organs, muscles, and your brain continue to work properly. But that same liver is responsible for breaking down alcohol so that it can be removed from the body. Since the liver is not good at multitasking, it has to stop releasing glucose and focus on breaking down the alcohol in the body first. As this happens, the glucose levels in the blood will significantly drop.

What does this mean for folks with diabetes?

- Excessive alcohol consumption will overwork the liver, delay release of glucose into the bloodstream, increase insulin secretion, and thus lead to dangerously low levels of blood sugar.
- Moderate alcohol intake will cause your blood sugar to rise initially. And since alcohol stimulates appetite, you may end up overeating resulting in higher body fat.
- Beer and sweet wine contain carbohydrates which when broken down are stored as glucose. This will result in high levels of blood sugar.
- Alcohol interferes with the positive effects of diabetic medications and can result in serious conditions.

In a nutshell, excessive alcohol consumption results in low blood sugar. If you've been diagnosed with diabetes, and if you must drink alcohol, then do the following:

- Ensure you don't consume more than two alcoholic drinks within 24 hours
- Do not drink on an empty stomach
- Avoid beers and sweet wine. Use sugar-free mixers for hard drinks.
- Have alcohol-free days.
- Watch what you eat.
- Frequently monitor your blood sugar levels
- Follow your nutritionist's recommendations

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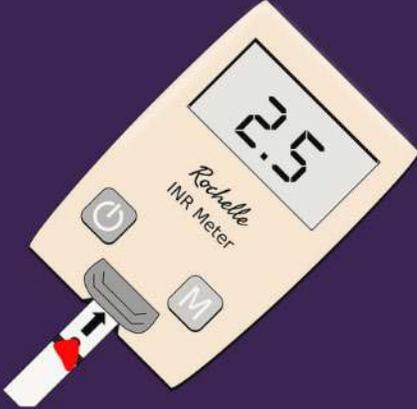
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