

GET REAL ON ALCOHOL

Let's talk about alcohol.

First of all, we would like to make it known that we do not think alcohol is evil. Heck, there are even reports about a really nice guy once turning water into wine. If he did this, then surely alcohol is not evil. And if you've spent anytime at OSi, you know that Dani keeps tequila behind the counter - for medicinal purposes of course. Having said that, if you consume alcohol, there are some things you should know:

The Density of Alcohol

Alcohol has 7.2 calories per gram. Alcohol is also burned like a simple sugar in the body. That means one gram of alcohol has almost twice the amount of calories as one gram of sugar (one gram of sugar has 4 calories), and it is utilized like sugar. When simple sugars, or alcohol, is introduced to the body, the body responds by raising insulin levels to shuttle the sugars into the cells for energy. When insulin levels rise, the body cannot burn fat. Also, this rush of insulin shuttles the sugar or alcohol into the cells, creating a significant drop in blood sugar. Low blood sugar makes the person crave sugar, or alcohol in this case. This can create an unwanted cycle that becomes difficult to break.

Calories Add Up

Yes, alcohol is almost twice as dense as sugar, calorically. But let's look at the math. A 4 ounce serving of wine has about 110 calories. If a person had one glass of wine per day, that would be 40,150 calories of wine in a year. One 150 calorie beer a day would be equal to 54,750 calories of beer in a year. It takes 3,500 calories to make a pound of fat, or add a pound of weight to your frame. If the calories from a glass of wine or bottle of beer per day were not burned off, that could result in a potential weight gain of 11.47 to 15.64 pounds in a year. There are other factors involved of course, but you get the point right?

Other Costs of Alcohol

There are other potential costs to drinking alcohol. Yes, alcoholism is a potential threat. But let's be honest, abusing anything, too much of anything, has a cost.

Too much protein can cause kidney problems. Too much sugar could cause insulin problems. Too much salt could cause blood pressure problems. Too much of anything tips the scales. Usually when the scales tip due to excess, they don't tip in our favor.

There are other costs though. Excess alcohol can raise estrogen levels in both males and females. For a male, this is not a good thing. Truthfully, it may not be good for females either. Alcohol can also disrupt sleep patterns. Yes it typically helps people fall asleep, but that's initially. The rest of the night can be spent tossing, turning, and waking.

You already know this, but the abuse of alcohol can be quite destructive. It can destroy your body, your life and your relationships. Any addiction can do this. Again, alcohol is not bad, but addiction can be.

Benefits of Alcohol

There may also be benefits of alcohol consumption as well. To not be a Debbie Downer, I'll mention them!

People who consume alcohol in moderation tend to live longer lives. Red wine has been shown to be good for the heart. White wine has been shown to be good for the lungs. Bourbon may help lower the risks of dementia. And, alcohol in general may benefit the kidneys.

Let's Get Real

The point to all of this is if you are going to consume alcohol understand what you are doing. It is not water. There is a caloric cost. There may be more costs involved.

As with everything, moderation is the key. However, even if moderation is exercised, the numbers still add up - refer to the above math. If you have a goal, if you have a mission, if you have a target you desperately want to hit, understand that every choice matters. Alcohol is not evil. No food is.

Anything can have its place in a healthy lifestyle. It is the integrity of our desires and our choices that determine how the costs add up. It is okay to enjoy a glass of wine per night. It may be okay to enjoy two glasses on some nights. Just weigh whether or not the choice is inline with what you want.

Get real with your decisions. Own the outcome because you own the process. Make sense?