

8 WAYS TO BEAT THE HOLIDAY HANGOVER

Avoid The Post-Party Headache This Holiday Season With These Simple Tips

BY LISA EVANS

'Tis the season to celebrate. Unfortunately, joyful holiday parties can leave you feeling more like Scrooge than Santa the next morning. While a few drinks may temporarily put you in a merry mood, Toronto-based naturopathic doctor Tara Andresen says alcohol causes many changes in the body that can leave you feeling gloomy and rundown the next morning.

You know the dry mouth and dizziness you experience the next day? That's caused by dehydration and electrolyte imbalances. And there's a reason you're dragging your feet - alcohol lowers blood pressure, causing your body to feel weak. Oh and that splitting headache? Blame expanded blood vessels which can also affect your sleep cycles, leaving you feel exhausted the next morning.

Although the holiday hangover may be inevitable with the vast amount of celebrations this season, there are tricks you can do to reduce its severity. Follow these easy tips and you'll be saying 'Cheers' instead of shedding tears the next day.

1. HAVE A MEAL BEFORE DRINKING

"Eat a good amount of protein with high-fibre carbohydrates to balance blood sugar and increase glucose storage," says Andresen. A large bowl of pasta or chicken with a baked potato is a good option.

2. SNACK THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT

A drop in blood sugar contributes to hangover symptoms. Snack on high-glycemic foods such as crackers and pretzels and vegetables such as carrots that are high in carbohydrates to avoid low blood sugar.

3. CHOOSE YOUR BEVERAGES WISELY

Some drinks, like red wine, tequila, bourbon and whisky, contain congeners, which have been found to increase the severity of a hangover. Andresen suggests sticking to congener-free gin or vodka.

4. ROTATE BEVERAGES

Having a non-alcoholic drink between each alcoholic beverage helps to maintain a low blood alcohol level, and keeps you hydrated. But, Andresen warns to avoid carbonated drinks. "They speed up the entry of alcohol into the bloodstream," she says. Stick to water instead.

5. REPLENISH BEFORE YOU SLEEP

Dehydration worsens hangover symptoms. Andresen recommends drinking one glass of water for every alcoholic drink, including one glass of water before bed and one first thing in the morning.

6. FEED YOUR BODY VITAMIN B

"B vitamins are quickly depleted by alcohol, contributing to the hangover," says Andresen. Vitamin-B deficiency makes it harder for the body to break down alcohol and dispose of it, making your hangover last longer. Andresen recommends taking one vitamin B capsule earlier in the day before drinking, another before bed and another in the morning with your breakfast.

7. AVOID THE JAVA JOLT

"Caffeine dehydrates the body, which is already dehydrated from excess alcohol consumption," says Andresen. Coconut water is good to have on hand during the festive holiday season. "It's rich in electrolytes to rehydrate the body," says Andresen.

8. EAT A HIGH PROTEIN BREAKFAST

If you can stomach it, eat eggs the next morning to balance your blood sugar levels and improve your energy. Eggs are not only a high-protein food but they also contain cysteine - an amino acid that helps rid the body of toxins.