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Health Benefits of "Dry" January

A "Dry" January is a month long break from drinking alcohol that was originally started by a United Kingdom organization to help reset people's relationship with alcohol. A 2016 study published in *Health Psychology* found that six months after the end of Dry January, people who had participated in Dry January reported having fewer drinks per day, drinking fewer days a week, and getting intoxicated less often. (Heavy drinkers should only quit with medical assistance as they can experience a life threatening form of withdrawal).

According to Dr. Wakim-Fleming, the effects of alcohol are cumulative. If a person drinks one glass of alcohol a day starting in their teens, they may be fine after 10 or 20 years, but after 40 or 50 years, they may start to experience liver problems.

Tips for Successfully Completing a Dry January:

1. **Recruit.** Recruit a friend, family member or partner to participate in Dry January with you. Having someone else participate in Dry January with you will create opportunities for non-drinking related activities and support during tough times.
2. **Put your alcohol away.** Have someone stash your alcohol away while you are participating in Dry January, or even throw the alcohol away!
3. **Plan non-drinking activities.** Plan activities that bring you joy (i.e. at home workouts, reading a book, completing a project you have meant to start.)
4. **Make an alcohol free cocktail.** There are many non-alcohol products available that taste great and won't leave you feeling terrible the next day.
5. **Reward yourself on February 1st.** Use the money you would have normally spent on alcohol and buy yourself a special gift.



The Benefits of a Dry January Include:

1. **You may lose weight.** Alcohol is loaded with calories (a 5 ounce glass of wine can contain 130 calories, a serving of beer can contain nearly 330 calories.) In fact, a 2017 study in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* found that people who binged on alcohol at least once a month over the course of one year were 41% more likely to become overweight after a 5 year period. Additionally, a study published in *Appetite*, found that people who drank a half a shot of alcohol ate 11% more than those who abstained and experienced more cravings for high-fat (high calorie) foods.

1. **You could get rid of an infection faster.** Alcohol can suppress your immune system and even one night of drinking too much can interfere with your body's ability to produce cytokines—the chemicals that help fight off infections.
2. **You can lower your risk of cancer.** According to the National Cancer Institute, drinking alcohol has been linked to an increased risk for cancers of the mouth, liver, breast, colon and rectum—and the more you drink, the more the risk increases. Additionally, by replacing those post drinking high fat meals with a high fiber diet, you can lower your colon cancer biomarkers in just two weeks.
3. **Your body will thank you.** When you drink alcohol, your body breaks the alcohol down into a toxic chemical called acetaldehyde and free radicals which damage your cells resulting in a variety of health problems. Additionally, average drinkers who stopped drinking for one month generally improved their insulin sensitivity, lowered their blood pressure, improved their liver function, reduced cholesterol, and decreased their levels of VEGF (a cancer promoting growth factor).
4. **Your sleep and energy may improve.** Giving up alcohol can lead to restorative sleep and more energy during the day as alcohol can lead to a restless nights sleep and suppress the deepest stage of sleep (REM stage).
5. **Your mood will improve.** Alcohol is a depressant and skipping a month of alcohol can stabilize your mood, increase your energy, and create a more optimistic mindset. Additionally, replacing a nightly drink with something that can boost your mood such as a workout, a new project or learning something new, is a great way to start a new healthy habit.



https://stylecaster.com/feature/how-to-do-dry-january-1184169/?utm_source=hsrd.yahoo.com&utm_medium=syndication&utm_campaign=feed

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