

the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q How much alcohol is too much?

A. Just how much is too much depends on the person. One way to measure this is through blood alcohol concentration (BAC), a calculation based on weight, gender, the amount of alcohol consumed, and the time it was consumed in – among other factors. Women will have higher BACs than men and thinner people will have higher BACs than heavier people, all other things being equal. BAC can be a useful benchmark since the risk of accidents, injuries and other negative by-products of drinking goes up as that number rises.

Another way to answer your question is to think about the reasons why people imbibe in the first place. For most drinkers, the difference between a fun night out with friends and a night of regrets comes down to one thing – dosage. Light or moderate drinkers (.05 BAC or lower) tend to enjoy more of the benefits of alcohol (social, fun, relaxing) and less of the things most of us try to avoid (getting sick, accidents, injuries, hangovers).

According to the experts, a good rule of thumb for lower-risk drinking is no more than 4 drinks for men or 3 drinks for women on any given day and no more than 14 drinks for men or 7 drinks for women per week¹. While 30% of UA students did not use alcohol in the past 30 days, the following tips may help should you choose to drink:

- 1. If you drink, have a plan.** Set a limit on how many drinks you will have, count until you get there, then stop. Drink on a full stomach, know the alcohol content of your drink and have a sober designated driver.
- 2. Pace yourself.** Take your time – it's one of the best ways to prevent drinking too much. Lower alcohol beers can be a better choice than quick shots of hard liquor.
- 3. Know your resources.** Want brief feedback on your alcohol use or know someone who does? Campus Health is currently offering free sessions with an alcohol specialist. Call 621-5700 and ask to make an appointment for BASICS.



¹ National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

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66% of UA men and 81% of UA women average 0-5 drinks per week. (2009 Health & Wellness Survey, N=1,720)

Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu and have a chance to win a \$100 Best Buy gift card during the Spring 2010 semester.



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