

# the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q How do drinking behaviors in college affect drinking behaviors post-college?

**A.** Can you imagine if some of the behaviors you engage in now continued after you graduated? Could you continue to add up multiple sleepless nights exploring Fourth Avenue or relishing house parties and still hold a meaningful job? How long would your marriage last if you still enjoyed the youthful freedom to be continually sparked by the next cute thing who flits by? What would your body be like if you are still eating excessive amounts of late night chili cheese dogs at age 45? So... not a pretty picture!

There are incredible behaviors that you will participate in while at college. Actively engaging in knowledge and discussion, exploring identity, celebrating diversity, new sensations and relationships are all part of a successful college experience. These behaviors constitute a college lifestyle that opens one up to being a life-long learner. However, continuing to be a life-long, high-risk drinker presents greater chance for harm and serious consequences.

College students who are problem drinkers that use alcohol to cope with personal problems and boost self-confidence are more likely to continue excessive drinking into adulthood. This is the result found by senior author Ada Demb's 2009 Ohio State University survey which suggests that adults who are still high-risk drinkers by age 34 may have inadvertently used alcohol as a crutch during college.

The good news is that high risk drinkers who stopped problem drinking after college typically reduced their alcohol use while still in school. Most students learn that the best way to enjoy the benefits of alcohol while minimizing undesirable outcomes is to moderate how much they drink. This is a trend that is reflected in each ongoing year here at UA where a natural "maturing" process occurs.

Some behavior changes post-graduation are good. And, at some point, chili cheese dogs tend to give way to finer dining.



**wildfact** One DQ chili cheese dog has 430 calories.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu)



[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

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