

# the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q Does drinking water while drinking alcohol have any benefits?

**A.** Absolutely! It can be the difference between getting a hangover or not. Here's why.

Alcohol is a diuretic which means it causes a greater loss of fluids than you gain when you drink it. Simply put, when drinking alcohol, coffee or caffeinated soda the body receives a signal to release water (that's why people who drink have to urinate more frequently). And no, the frequent urination while drinking is not getting the alcohol out of the body faster.

With this excessive urination comes the loss of electrolytes and minerals such as sodium, potassium and magnesium. You are now officially dehydrated. This is caused by fluid loss or not drinking enough liquids. In a dehydrated state, your body does not have enough fluids to function properly. Symptoms of dehydration can include a dry mouth, headache, dark yellow urine, low urine output, a lack of tears, low blood pressure, rapid heartbeat and a general lethargic state. You may know this as a hangover.

The cure is to replenish the fluids your body lost the night before from drinking. Drink water. You might be tempted to have coffee the next morning but that's another diuretic so go with water or other non-alcoholic, non-carbonated, non-caffeinated drinks. Avoid taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) if you've been drinking because combining acetaminophen and alcohol can have harmful effects on the liver.

Also, you are in need of pre-party planning to avoid the repeat nuisance of a hangover. That part's easy; drink less and pace your drinks throughout the evening.

A tip to consider when drinking alcohol is to consume water before, during and after drinking. If you find yourself urinating a lot while drinking alcohol, consider it a signal to consume some other fluids, perhaps skipping a round of shots and replacing it with water. It is better to be proactive before and during alcohol consumption than to be reactionary the next morning.



wildfact

November 17th was the Great American Smokeout Day. It's not too late to quit! Call ASHLine at 1-800-55-66-222 in the College of Public Health for your quit plan and quit aids.



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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