

the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Better to drink beer or hard liquor?

A. If you are among the two-thirds of UA students who drink, there is no shortage of alcohol-related options to choose from. Many people are surprised to learn that if measured correctly, a 1 oz. shot of hard liquor at 40% alcohol (e.g. vodka, gin, whiskey, rum, tequila) has the same amount of alcohol as a 12 oz. Keystone Light at around 4% alcohol. The shot has more alcohol in less volume; for the beer, it's the other way around.

So given that both have the same amount of total alcohol – often described as a “standard drink” – you may wonder why the shot seems more formidable. The answer has everything to do with the amount of time it takes to consume. Ever see someone wandering around a party sipping from a shot glass? We didn't think so. Unless you are drinking single malt scotch, shots are typically downed all at once. Beers, on the other hand, usually take more time to drink.

As you can see, there really isn't anything special about that 1 oz. shot other than the fact that it's a standard drink that gets consumed very fast. But if you are trying to enjoy the social perks of alcohol while avoiding the drunk/depressant aspects and their aftereffects (e.g. hangovers, blackouts, regrets, throwing up), time is one factor you will want on your side.

Here are a few things that can help:

1. Choose beers with lower alcohol contents (typically 4-5%)
2. Pace yourself as you go. A good rule of thumb is two drinks per hour for men and one drink per hour for women.
3. BYOK – That's “Bring Your Own Koozie”: these insulated can or bottle coolers keep your beer cold longer, so you can take your time – plus they can be great conversation starters.

In conclusion, unless you are a shot sipper, beer is a better option if you choose to drink and want more of the benefits of slower, moderate drinking while minimizing potentially awkward and/or risky moments. For more Red Cup online, check out www.health.arizona.edu or sign up for our weekly email at redcup@email.arizona.edu.



wildfact

One billion valentines are sent each year worldwide, making it second to only Christmas among card-sending holidays. Women purchase about 85% of all valentines.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



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The Red Cup Q&A is written by Lynn Reyes, LCSW, LSAC, David Salafsky, MPH, Lee Ann Hamilton, MA, CHES, and Spencer Gorin, RN, in the Health Promotion and Preventive Services (HPPS) department of the UA Campus Health Service.