

# the **RED CUP** Q&A



**separating alcohol fact from fiction**  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## **Q** How much alcohol makes you gain weight?

**A.** Yes, alcohol can bring unwanted calories! Your question presumes you'd prefer a prevention strategy over a crash diet to deal with a case of the freshman fifteen from alcohol.

Many factors may contribute to weight gain and alcohol can be one culprit. Away from home for the first time, some students consume more alcohol. And let's face it, it's easy to overlook calories from drinks.

When you drink alcohol, it's broken down into acetate (basically vinegar), which the body will burn before any other calorie you've consumed or stored, including fat or even sugar. Although there is no fat in alcohol, calories from alcohol are unusual in that they can't be stored or converted to energy for later use. Meaning that calories from alcohol are used first by the body, while calories from food that would otherwise be burned are stored, potentially contributing to weight gain.

Many drinkers are unaware of how many calories their favorite drinks contain because beverage companies are not required to put this information on their product. And don't assume that light beer doesn't have many calories. Although it has fewer calories than regular beer, the average light beer still contains around 100 per 12 oz can and regular beer can range from approximately 140-200 calories. And while a 1.5 oz shot may seem small, it can contain anywhere from 100-200 calories. Mixed drinks are where the calories really add up, depending on how calorie laden your mixers are. A margarita can have a whopping 700 calories! The key is to limit the number of drinks added to your diet.

Our advice is to do personal research on your favorite beverages, amounts, and mixers. Caloric information is available online and nutrition consultations are available by calling Campus Health at 621-9202.



### wildfact

**Alcohol is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream from the small intestine and less rapidly from the stomach and colon.**



**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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