

the

RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Drinking lots of water helps you wake up sober, right?

A. H2O helps, but only *time* will get your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) back down to “zero.” It is true that drinking water before, during, and after drinking alcohol can help combat the effects of a hangover, mostly caused by dehydration.

Four main factors determine your BAC: weight, sex, time, and alcohol amount. You can't change your weight and sex while drinking, but you can control how strong your drinks are and how fast you drink them. Women often reach higher BACs than their male drinking partners because women's bodies break down alcohol more slowly than men's. Most women have lower levels (30% less) of the liver enzyme, alcohol dehydrogenase, which metabolizes alcohol.

Many people think they will just sleep it off and “wake up sober.” The truth is, the liver takes time to process alcohol. The more you drink, the longer it takes. So, if you have to study, work, or drive home the morning after partying, you *might* still be impaired when you get out of bed.

To see how long it takes the average person to sober up, check out the charts below. 1 drink = 12 oz. beer= 4-5 oz. wine= 1 oz. liquor

Hours to Zero BAC for Women

# Drinks	100 lbs.	120 lbs.	140 lbs.	160 lbs.	180 lbs.	200 lbs.
12	34 hrs.	28	24	21	19	16.5
9	26 hrs.	21.5	21.5	16	14.5	13
6	17.5 hrs.	14	12.5	11	9.5	8.5
3	9 hrs.	7	6.5	5.5	5	4.5
1	3 hrs.	2.5	2	2	1.5	1.5

Hours to Zero BAC for Men

# Drinks	120 lbs.	140 lbs.	160 lbs.	180 lbs.	200 lbs.	220 lbs.
12	23 hrs.	20	17	15	13.5	13
9	18 hrs.	15	13.5	11.5	10.5	10
6	12 hrs.	10	9	8	7	6.5
3	6 hrs.	5	4.5	4	3.5	3.4
1	2 hrs.	2	2	1.5	1	1

For an expanded table of weights and drinks, check out www.health.arizona.edu and search for “hours to zero.”

wildfact

The Czech Republic is #1 in the world in beer consumption (U.S. is #15) based on liters per person, according to a 2009 study by *The Economist*.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

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