

# the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q How many drinks on average will get you to the .08 limit or above?

**A.** You may be surprised that just 2-4 drinks in one hour will land most drinkers above .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC). An individual's BAC depends on four factors: weight, gender, time, and strength of the drinks. While you **can** control how much and how fast you drink, weight and gender aren't changeable in one evening.

A standard drink is 12 ounces of beer or 4 oz. of wine or 1 ounce shot of 80 proof liquor (40% ethanol). Every standard drink that a 140 pound woman consumes will raise her BAC .032. So, 3 drinks x .032 puts her at .096, which is over the legal DUI limit of .08 for those 21 and older. Every standard drink that a 180 male consumes will raise his BAC .02. Four standard drinks would put him right at .08. To see how weight and gender affect BAC see the tables below:

| Women    | BAC/drink |
|----------|-----------|
| 100 lbs. | .045      |
| 140 lbs. | .032      |
| 180 lbs. | .025      |

| Men      | BAC/drink |
|----------|-----------|
| 140 lbs. | .026      |
| 180 lbs. | .020      |
| 220 lbs. | .017      |

Why such a big difference in how alcohol affects men and women? Weight is big factor. Females generally weigh less than men and they have less alcohol dehydrogenase (the liver enzyme that metabolizes alcohol) than males. Men typically have more muscle mass than women – which helps dilute alcohol in the blood stream.

To stay safer when drinking alcohol, it's recommended that women limit themselves to one standard drink an hour and men limit drinks to one or two drinks per hour. With moderate drinking, you likely will have better times, better memories, and fewer regrets.



wildfact

**A 40 oz. Budweiser is actually 3.8 standard drinks.**



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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