

Alcohol and Women – A Way to Unwind or a Health Hazard

Guide on to Understanding the Risks of Alcohol for Women



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Introduction

It's not uncommon for women to be stressed. Many of them work outside of the home at a nine-to-five job or perhaps a position with the added stress of shift work. They may have a spouse, children, and home to care for on top of a career. It's no wonder they may occasionally feel the need to unwind after a long, and often tiring day.

There are many ways you can choose to unwind as a woman. You can go to the gym and work out, for example. Some women meditate or do yoga as a means to de-stress. For some, their preferred choice to relax is a glass of wine or other type of alcoholic beverage. However, when it comes to alcohol and women, is it a way to unwind or a health hazard? The answer you get will often depend on who you ask.

DISCLAIMER: This report was not written by a medical professional and should not be used to self-diagnose or self-treat. If you feel you have a problem with drinking, please contact your doctor. They are qualified to diagnose and treat any issues you might have. You may also desire to find a local Alcoholics Anonymous chapter to receive support you need to overcome alcohol dependency.

Why Women Drink

Women drink for a variety of reasons many of which are the same as men's reasons. Sometimes women drink to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, graduation, promotion, or another milestone in their lives. They want to enjoy themselves, so they may think that by reaching for that glass of wine they will succeed in just that.

Another reason some women choose to drink is they find it to be a good way to eliminate stress. Women live busy and sometimes complicated lives. They have so many people clamoring for their attention, and yet they only have the same hours in a day as everyone else. When it seems they simply can't accomplish everything they need to do, they may imbibe to bring their stress to a manageable level.

You then find those women who are perhaps on the shy side and are uptight when they go out with their friends. If this is the case, they may have a cocktail to bolster their confidence. One problem with this practice, however, is that you can also lose some of your inhibitions which could lead you to make choices you wouldn't normally make. These choices often aren't always the most beneficial to you or to those around you.

Are you having problems sleeping? Since alcohol is a depressant, some women choose to drink in order to bring themselves "down" at the end of the day. Alcohol gives them enough of a release to enable them to fall asleep. This can be a problem if these same women are also in the habit of taking prescription or over-the-counter medications to assist them in sleeping. This kind of combination can easily become habit forming but it can also result in accident overdose. It's important to remember to never drink alcohol at the same time you are taking any over-the-counter or prescription medications.

After a long week of work, classes, or dealing with your children, you may just want to get away from it all and have some fun. Having a drink or two may give you the confidence to belt out a song when Karaoke begins. You may also feel more free and able to dance the night away, especially if this is not something you would normally do without consuming alcohol.

Women are naturally social beings. They enjoy that connection with other women so they see having a drink with friends as the perfect opportunity to experience that. This is particularly the case if women are in a new situation such as starting a new job or moving to a new city. Drinking allows you to loosen up and be friendlier. If they're nervous, a drink may help them settle down enough to open up and allow people to get to know them.

Some women may turn to a glass of wine or other alcoholic drink to separate the parts of their day. It is also possible that women drink because they need something to mark the point where they stop being a mom and start being a woman, wife, or partner. They know that drinking is something only adults are supposed to do, so they feel more grown up when they drink.

Unfortunately, it can often become too easy some women to become dependent upon their evening drink. They may reach the point where they feel they simply must have that drink in order to wind down, relax, or even survive. Part of the issues women and alcohol is how easily this simple gesture of pouring a drink as they walk in the door or after they put the children to bed can turn into a major problem in no time at all. It often happens before they even realize it themselves, their family, co-workers, and friends may begin to wonder if there is an alcohol problem in the making. The people around them start to worry, not only about potential addictions, but the possibility of negative effects on their health and safety, as well.

While these aren't the only reasons why some women turn to alcohol, they do give you a good idea as to some of the possible choices women are making in relation to drinking. If you are a woman who grabs a glass of wine or bottle of beer as you walk in the door at the end of the day in order to unwind, are you sure it's a habit you want to continue?

Is Having a Glass of Wine to Unwind Okay?

One of the main reasons people, particularly women, start drinking is because they think it will help them deal with the stress in their lives. They feel a glass of wine helps soothe and smooth away the rough edges of the day. But is having a glass of wine each day a good idea?

Many cultures choose to regularly accompany meals with a glass of wine. Go to a French restaurant and you may be hard-pressed to find non-alcoholic drinks on the menu. Are you an Italian aficionado? You'll likely be handed a wine menu so you can choose a glass of wine to enjoy with your meal. Some cultures even serve wine with lunch, and this includes to those what we in the United States consider to be "legal drinking age." Many European countries start serving small glasses of wine to children as young as 7 or 8 years old with both lunch and supper.

The fact is wine does have a calming effect. It slows the heart rate, makes it easier to block the thoughts trying to gain access to your mind, and depresses the central nervous system. However, even though these and other benefits can be found in drinking a glass of wine each evening to unwind, some wonder if the practice is a wise one.

Some women who readily admit to having a glass of wine or other alcoholic beverage to help them unwind after a tough day also admit to having more than one. In fact, they often find that having only one drink doesn't produce the same result if they've been drinking for a very long time. The

same seems true in many cases where drinking started at a young age such as in the early teenage years.

The problem of starting with having one drink is that it often turns into having a second. Some women find they simply can't relax without their nightly drink. This tendency to need to drink or to drink more alcohol to receive the same effect can lead women to become alcoholics. And, unfortunately, it is women who have been noted to have the most trouble admitting even the possibility of having a drinking problem much less admitting to actually being an alcoholic.

Have you considered how your evening drink affects your family if you drink at home? Some women have fortunately realized their drinking could put their children's lives in danger. However, there are many others who haven't come to that realization or how many times they have not only put their own lives, but also those of their children in the family vehicle and innocent people on the roads, sidewalks, or even parking lots around them. You see if there is a problem related to drinking, many women will find the need to acquire more of a high priority than the safety of those around them. This is normally a direct result of having already consumed more than they should have in the first place.

Not every woman who drinks a glass of wine with dinner, or to help them relax at the end of the day is going to develop an addiction to alcohol. However, you do want to be sure you keep your drinking in perspective. If you ever find you're looking too forward to your time to drink, or you're drinking too much at one time, you may want to consider getting help. Other signs which may indicate there could be a developing addiction to alcohol are such actions as lying about the amount you have consumed (particularly to your spouse or significant other), hiding or "stashing" reserves of alcohol in places you assume others won't find them, and beginning to drink earlier in the day than you used to. While this is not a complete list, it will give you some ideas of what to watch for.

Before discussing the harmful effects of drinking alcohol, it is important to note there are some benefits of drinking wine or other alcoholic beverages. Remember, alcohol isn't all bad; the problem begins when a person becomes dependent upon it.

Benefits of Drinking Wine

Some people claim wine can't be a bad thing because Jesus' first miracle in the Bible was to turn water into wine. In fact, until the advent of refrigeration, much of the beverages consumed in the past have been alcoholic in nature. The water in an area may not have been suitable for drinking but people knew how to make wine, mead, and beer which would have been safer to drink. As time passed, they learned to create beverages with higher alcoholic content.

Recent research has indicated there are benefits to drinking wine as long as you do it in moderation. Doctors have often wondered how some cultures can have low incidences of heart disease. Take the French, for instance. Their diet is often filled with foods laden with cream. However, they have fewer cases of heart attacks each year. After some time and much research, doctors realized the wine they consumed with meals was the answer they'd been searching for.

Drinking one glass of red wine a day, and one glass only, can be very beneficial to your health. Here are some of the benefits you can see:

* Reduce your risk of having a heart attack by drinking a glass of red wine each day. Two or more glasses, however, increase the possibility that you'll develop breast cancer.

- * Increase bone strength with one glass; weaken bone strength by drinking more than one glass of wine which can lead to osteoporosis.
- * Possibly keep your girlish figure with one glass of wine. Drink additional glasses and the amount of fats remaining in your blood will be increased.
- * Improve your memory by drinking one glass of wine each day. Drinking more than two glasses and smoking tobacco have been proven to increase your possibility of developing Alzheimer's disease.
- * Reduce your chance of having a stroke with one daily glass of wine; your chances are raised when you drink more than one glass.

How much is the recommended amount of wine to drink to receive these benefits? Many medical experts agree you'd want to limit your consumption to one four ounce glass per day. Anything more than that could have the detrimental effects listed above and more.

Wine has also been touted to prevent ulcers. It seems the alcohol in one glass of wine reduces the bacteria which causes ulcer infections. There may also be benefits for those with ulcers if they drink up to three glasses but more is not recommended.

Studies have also shown to benefit those with cancer. Wine helps suppress cancer due to the compound Reversatrol. It is also high in the antioxidants called bioflavonoids. By helping cancer patients to relax, wine may also be important for helping them fight the cancer better. Reports have been issued claiming those who drink one to three glasses of wine a day are healthier than those who don't. These reports may be true to an extent but remember that the more you drink the more likely you are to develop serious problems handling alcohol in whatever form it takes.

What Are the Health Hazards?

Some women choose to drink a glass of wine to help them unwind and it can do that to a certain degree. The combination of stress and alcohol may possibly lead to problems with alcohol in the future however that connection hasn't been proven to this point.

No one will deny the problems which can occur in a family, at work, or among friends if heavy drinking becomes the norm. How do you handle stress? Do you have a group of people to support you when you're under a great deal of stress? What affect does adding alcohol cause when you're stressed? Think about these questions and then consider this fact: 50 percent of the alcohol you drink will enter your bloodstream as early as 10 minutes after your first drink.

Women who drink to excess, or who binge drink, are setting themselves up to develop serious health problems. They take a chance with each additional drink of increasing their chances of developing liver disease or becoming entirely dependent upon alcohol to function. Many women consider this a problem others may have to face; they won't have to deal with it. It won't happen to them.

With all of the emphasis on the effects of drinking and driving, you probably know that drinking alcohol can adversely affect your ability to drive safely. Your reflexes are slowed, you may not be able to focus as well, and falling asleep or blacking out is more likely to occur. When you consider you're more likely to die in a single-vehicle crash after drinking just one glass of wine on an empty stomach, you may want to seriously think about taking that drink if you're driving.

Heavy drinking impairs your judgment. You may make decisions while you're drinking which you would never consider while sober. Women increase their chance of becoming the victim of sexual assault or another violent crime.

Do you have children yet? If you don't and you'd like to have them in the future, you might be interested in learning that drinking alcohol can affect your ability to get pregnant. Your decision to drink more than one glass of wine a day could determine whether or not you are able to conceive. If you haven't had children yet, you may want to avoid alcohol altogether so your chances of becoming pregnant isn't hindered when the time comes.

Speaking of babies, you probably know that the alcohol you consume while you're pregnant doesn't only affect your own body, it also affects your unborn child. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a combination of birth defects of the brain caused by the consumption of alcohol while a woman is pregnant. Babies with FAS often have low birth weights, they may be listed as failure to thrive, and they will most likely have lifelong learning problems.

Regularly consuming large amounts of alcohol has been proven to increase a woman's chance of developing breast cancer. If you're a pre-menopausal woman your chances are higher than for a woman who has already experience menopause. Since many women smoke tobacco or use oral contraceptives while they're drinking you can expect your chances of developing breast cancer to rise even further.

The presence of alcohol in your bloodstream can impair the ability of the body to use vitamin D. Vitamin D is important for strong bones so you don't develop osteoporosis. When you drink alcoholic beverages your body's ability to use that vitamin is diminished.

How Do You Know If You Have a Problem?

You may be concerned if you're developing a drinking problem. Think about how you would answer each of these questions:

1. Do you become when others make comments about or criticize the amount you drink?
2. Do you ever feel like you're drinking too much and should cut back on the amount?
3. Are you likely to drink first thing in the morning so you can face the day or get rid of a hangover?
4. Do you feel guilty or bad about your drinking?
5. Do you consistently forget what you do while you're drinking?

How many "yes" answers did you have? One may indicate a possible problem with alcohol. More than one "yes" answer means a visit to your doctor is warranted. Your doctor will be able to assess your drinking behavior and make a proper diagnosis.

Why is Drinking More Hazardous to Women than Men?

Until recent years most of the research done about the effects of alcohol has been on men. And while men and women may be alike in many ways, there are many differences as well. More studies are being conducted using women as the subjects which means researchers now know how alcohol affects women.

Generally women drink less alcohol than men; they are also less likely to develop alcohol dependency. Women are influenced by those around them when they drink. If their husband drinks heavily, chances are women will do the same. This could also pertain to friends and other family.

Because of their smaller size, women are going to become intoxicated quicker when drinking. The amount of alcohol required to become inebriated is also less. Another reason why women become intoxicated quicker than men has to do with the lower total water content in their body. The higher water content enables the alcohol to be diluted more when it passes into the bloodstream meaning there is less alcohol in men's blood than in women's.

The liver is the organ in the body which breaks down the alcohol you consume. Dehydrogenase is the enzyme responsible for this process. Not only does a woman get drunk quicker than a man, she will also suffer the effects for a longer duration.

When you consider the differences in the physiology of men and women, is there any wonder they are affected by alcohol differently? Since alcohol is absorbed into a woman's bloodstream quicker there's no reason to doubt the fact women are more susceptible to cirrhosis of the liver and other problems than men.

Conclusion

Alcohol and women may not be the best combination. Sure, you can use a glass of wine occasionally to help you unwind, but you may not want to make a regular habit of it. Consider the health hazards of drinking alcoholic beverages, to yourself and potentially others around you. After thinking about the possible consequences you may decide it's better to find other ways to unwind. Give it some thought and see what you can come up with.



The Importance of Emotional & Psychological Health

Often, we do not focus on psychological health as vigilantly as we do an individual's physical health, regardless of gender or age. But like our physical wellbeing, we must also **be attentive to our psychological, or mental, state** to consider ourselves fully fit.

Many illness and conditions fall into this broad mental health spectrum such as learning disorders, concentration, tension, anxiety – test taking is a prime example – depression, mood swings, depression, and even sleeplessness.

At Native Remedies you will find a comprehensive set of herbal remedies to help you manage and optimize your psychological health – naturally and safely.

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While each of our natural remedies works well on its own to address a specific body function or relieve a particular symptom, we believe that by combining our herbal and homeopathic remedies you will find a complete solution that is safe and highly effective.

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