

Why Drinking Alcohol Makes You Fat

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There are many factors that affect weight loss, making the process more complicated than it may seem. The body produces different hormones in response to different types of foods and/or drinks. Losing weight is not only about calorie consumption but also about the types of foods and drinks consumed. Alcohol is one of the worst culprits when it comes to inhibiting weight loss because it disrupts the delicate balance of nutrition, fluid and hormones needed to lose fat.

Alcohol boosts cortisol, a fat-creating hormone

Drinking heavily or even occasionally increases the body's release of cortisol - the hormone that breaks down muscle and retains fat. This loss of muscle can mean a **huge slowdown in one's metabolism**

, making it easier to gain weight. In addition, alcohol causes a drop in testosterone in men, a hormone which helps burn fat.

Alcohol also blocks the body from burning fat. Research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that fat metabolism can be reduced by as much as 73 percent after only two drinks of vodka and lemonade in a one-hour time period. In effect, alcohol shuts down the body's ability to access fat stores for energy. The body needs to be well-hydrated in order to build muscle and burn fat. Alcohol has the effect of dehydrating the body.

Drinking often accompanies irresponsible eating

Because drinking often puts one in a relaxed party mood, it is easier to indulge in snacks, potato chips and other unhealthy party foods -- the more one drinks the less one seems to care.

Alcohol is a powerful appetizer. An aperitif is often offered in restaurants to stimulate the appetite. Research has shown that there is a definite correlation between the amount of alcohol consumed before a meal and the amount of food eaten and that people eat more when they have beer or wine with their meal. Since alcohol causes the brain to release dopamine, the pleasure and addiction hormone, the result is an often addictive desire for more alcohol and food. This means one is hit with a double whammy when it comes to gaining weight: excess calories come from both the alcohol and the extra food that is usually consumed as a result of a stimulated appetite.

Alcohol is high in calories

Alcohol comes with very little nutritional value but is very high in calories. It is very easy to knock back a 200ml glass of wine but that is equivalent, in calories, to eating 25ml (5 teaspoons) of butter. Seldom do people stop at one glass of wine or one beer, and mixing alcohol with sugary mixers such as lemonade means even more calories as the drink now contains sugar and alcohol.

Simply put, alcohol consumption on a regular basis and weight loss don't mix.