

A Headache of a Hangover



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No one will argue of the importance of healthy living. As part of healthy living, there comes a time where people need to unwind. Sometimes unwinding may involve the consumption of alcohol.

Weekend Drinks

In moderation, alcohol consumption is of minimal risk to your health. Certain types of alcohol, such as red wine, have been proven to be beneficial in preventing heart disease. Drinking, however, often leads to the dreaded morning after headache—commonly known as the hangover.

The morning after

In a study of 48 social drinkers between the ages of 18 and 43, memory (free recall) remained impaired at 9a.m. following a night of drinking. Recognition and psychomotor performances were also impaired throughout the morning despite blood alcohol levels of zero or very near zero. In addition to affecting your mind, hangover symptoms can include headaches, dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, excessive sweating and so on. Can we minimize the hangover?

Alcohol and your system

Acute or chronic alcohol consumption can lead to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. I find that my patients often benefit from an intravenous (IV) of vitamins and minerals the morning after a night of drinking. It not only re-hydrates, but it replaces the vitamins and minerals that were lost the night before. The synergistic combination of vitamins and minerals helps patients get over their hangover symptoms. Why? The answer can be found by looking at the vitamins and minerals depleted by alcohol consumption.

- Zinc

Zinc is a key nutrient involved in the metabolism of alcohol. Zinc deficiency can occur with both acute and chronic alcohol intake. When taken with vitamin C, zinc greatly increases alcohol detoxification.

- B Vitamins

Alcohol interferes with the absorption of a number of B vitamins. It also interferes with the conversion of B vitamins to their active forms. In a chronic alcohol drinker, a vitamin B1 deficiency is not uncommon.

- Magnesium

Studies have shown that alcohol intake causes a cellular and renal loss of magnesium. Approximately 60% of alcoholics are magnesium deficient, leading researchers to believe that magnesium deficiency may be responsible for an increased risk of heart disease. Hangover headaches have been shown to improve with intravenous administration of magnesium sulfate.

Avoid excess

In excess, alcohol has been associated with liver disease, risk of cancer, risk of heart disease, psychosocial disorders and in some cases, death. If you know of someone who suffers from alcoholism, it is important that they seek medical and psychosocial care.