

## **Diabetes and Alcohol**

Alcohol is processed in the body very similarly to the way fat is processed, and alcohol provides almost as many calories. Therefore, drinking alcohol in people with diabetes can cause your blood sugar to rise. If you choose to drink alcohol, only drink it occasionally and when your diabetes and blood sugar level are well-controlled. If you are following a calorie-controlled meal plan, one drink of alcohol should be counted as two fat exchanges.

It is a good idea to check with your doctor if you are overweight or have high blood pressure or high triglyceride levels before drinking alcohol. If you are in doubt about whether drinking alcohol is safe for you, check with your doctor.

### **Effects of Alcohol on Diabetes**

Here are some other ways that alcohol can affect diabetes:

- While moderate amounts of alcohol can cause blood sugar to rise, excess alcohol can actually decrease your blood sugar level -- sometimes causing it to drop into dangerous levels.
- Beer and sweet wine contain carbohydrates and may raise blood sugar.
- Alcohol stimulates your appetite, which can cause you to overeat and may affect your blood sugar control.
- Alcohol can interfere with the positive effects of oral diabetes medicines or insulin.
- Alcohol may increase triglyceride levels.
- Alcohol may increase blood pressure.
- Alcohol can cause flushing, nausea, increased heart rate, and slurred speech.

### **Diabetes and Alcohol Consumption Dos and Don'ts**

- People with diabetes should follow these alcohol consumption guidelines:
- Do not drink more than two drinks of alcohol in a one-day period.  
(Example: one alcoholic drink = 5-ounce glass of wine, 1 1/2-ounce "shot" of liquor or 12-ounce beer).
- Drink alcohol only with food.
- Drink slowly.

- Avoid "sugary" mixed drinks, sweet wines, or cordials.
- Mix liquor with water or diet soft drinks