

Diabetes and Alcohol

If you drink a moderate amount, your blood sugar can go up because of the sugar in alcohol.

If you drink a lot of alcohol, your blood sugar can drop to dangerously low levels.

Do not drink alcohol until you have discussed it first with your doctor.

For many reasons, it's best to avoid drinking alcohol if you have diabetes. This is especially true if you have complications from diabetes like high blood pressure.

Questions to ask yourself before drinking alcohol:

- ⇒ Is my diabetes in good control right now?
- ⇒ Is my blood pressure in good control right now?
- ⇒ Do I know how alcohol affects my sugar?
- ⇒ Do I take any medications that should not be mixed with alcohol?
- ⇒ Does my health team agree that safe drinking is okay for me?

Having one drink occasionally is not a problem for some people with diabetes. But, if you have long-term complications from diabetes, it's best to avoid alcohol altogether.

Alcohol can make these health conditions worse:

- ⇒ Burning or tingling in the hands or feet, if you have nerve damage
- ⇒ Damage to your eyes
- ⇒ Blood pressure that isn't controlled
- ⇒ High triglycerides
- ⇒ Kidney damage

Important tips:

- ⇒ If you don't drink, don't start now that you have diabetes.
- ⇒ Some research shows that a glass of wine can have heart benefits. But, drinking too much alcohol erases all benefits. Avoid over-drinking. Avoid sugary alcoholic drinks.
- ⇒ Tell your health team if you drink regularly or if your drinking habits change.
- ⇒ Always eat a meal or snack after you've had alcohol. Test your sugar before bed if you've had a drink in the evening to see whether you need a snack before sleeping.