

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a drug formed through the fermentation of carbohydrates. Most alcohols are toxic – they have the ability to penetrate cells rapidly, destroying critical cell structures. Ethanol, the type of alcohol we drink, is less toxic. When diluted sufficiently, ethanol can be tolerated by the body.

ALCOHOL 101

- Alcohol molecules require no digestion. On an empty stomach, 20% of the molecules reach the brain within one minute of consumption.
- Alcohol is non-nutritive. Your body cannot use alcohol to produce energy.
- Alcohol contains **7** calories per gram....more than carbohydrates/protein, but slightly less than fat.
- Alcohol is NOT a carbohydrate. When absorbed, the body stores alcohol as fat.
- **Moderation** = 1 drink for women/ 2 drinks for men.

AFFECTS ON THE BODY

- **Stomach** – Stomach cells begin to over secrete acid, leaving the stomach and esophagus susceptible to ulcers.
- **Intestine** – Intestinal cells fail to absorb B vitamins (thiamin, folate, and vitamin B12).
- **Liver** – Liver cells lose their efficiency in activating Vitamin D and alter their ability to produce and excrete bile.....leading to a fatty liver and eventually cirrhosis.
- **Nutrient Deficiency** – Alcohol drastically affects the body's ability to metabolize and synthesize (create) protein. This can weaken the body's immune function and cause protein deficiency.

ALCOHOL and HEALTH BENEFITS?????

Many people “tout” the cardiovascular benefits of alcohol consumption. However, most studies do not indicate a positive correlation. In fact, increased cancer risk (namely breast and prostate) was observed among those who consumed alcohol. Contrary to popular belief, alcohol should not be recommended as a means of reducing risk for heart disease and stroke.