



## DRY JANUARY

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Dry January is a month-long challenge to cut out alcohol consumption. With the New Year, we often reflect on habits we want to change or how we can improve our health. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism gives the recommendation to limit alcohol to two daily drinks or less for men, and no more than one drink a day for women. You may have had more drinks over the holidays than in your typical week, so if you've indulged a lot lately or just want to challenge yourself for your health, Dry January is a great opportunity to take a break from alcohol.

### NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Consuming too much alcohol at once dehydrates you, can make you sick or hungover, and can even lead to alcohol poisoning. It also increases your chances of experiencing an injury or engaging in risky behavior while intoxicated. Consuming too much alcohol regularly over time is detrimental to your health for many reasons. It increases your chances of developing high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems, and several types of cancers. And not only the liquor affects your health. Many alcoholic drinks contain lots of sugar and calories, and some people even experience allergic reactions to ingredients in alcohol. If you drink in excess, you may not even realize that certain

liquors are making you sicker than others or that your body's reaction is more like an allergy.

### BENEFITS OF A BREAK

Dry January has not been studied for long enough to effectively show if participants drink less overall throughout the full remainder of the year, but you are likely to drink less right after Dry January if you participate. Studies have shown abstaining from alcohol even for a short period of time can improve cognitive function and help you get more restful sleep. Other benefits are that you are likely to lose a little weight when you skip the liquid calories. Dry January gives your body 31 days to recover and gives you time to reflect on how much alcohol you would

normally consume and its effects on you. You will even save money when you do not drink.

## **THE DIFFICULT STUFF**

Dry January has the potential to reveal alcohol problems. You may not feel like you have any dependence on alcohol until you try to eliminate it. Cutting yourself off ‘cold turkey’ makes any dependence more apparent, makes you more likely to replace alcohol with another bad habit, and could potentially make you binge on alcohol after taking a break. If you start to show signs of alcohol withdrawal like anxiety, headaches, nausea, vomiting, shakes, sweating, or insomnia, it’s time to talk to a healthcare provider about your options for a safe, monitored detox and support for your recovery.

## **TRYING DRY**

Whether you consume alcohol regularly or just on occasion, Dry January is a chance to take a sizeable break and see if you feel the positive effects. If it

has been a while since you’ve taken a break from drinking, commit to Dry January. You can drink more water or try a ‘mocktail’ if you still like to go out and order a drink. The goal is not necessarily to permanently change your habits, but this experiment promotes an opportunity to be mindful of your consumption, prompt conversations about alcohol, and examine how your drinking habits affect your overall health.

Use the Try Dry app to track your progress and other perks like the money you save by skipping alcohol. Try Dry January with a friend to compare the results you feel, and use the money you save on some self-care to reward yourself!

### References

1. [Thinking of trying Dry January? Steps for success - Harvard Health](#)
2. [Dry January: What Is It, and Why You Should Try It | Psychology Today](#)
3. [Drinking too much alcohol can harm your health. Learn the facts | CDC](#)