

Booze Patrol

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it doesn't just make you Mr. Floppy in bed!

It's late one Saturday evening in October and at a hockey club near you a group of men and women are seated around a section of tables. Lots of noise, 2 big clear jugs in the middle of a table containing a purple liquid - and it doesn't take long before one is empty and the poor soul who lost the 'matchbox game' has to buy another jug of....Snakebite! Later that evening you may be able to watch Jason demonstrates exactly how much of the stuff he has been able to put away as you see him rushing outside. Great fun to watch, great to take part in (**well it seems to be at the time!**), but not so great the following morning... not to mention the lack of performance with your other half where you probably fumbled around for a few minutes before snoring your head off. No change here eh!

We all like a drink from time to time but how this affects our performance and our health is a different matter. The obvious detrimental effects of alcohol on performance relate directly to the amount of alcohol drunk - yes you've heard it all before you say. Binge drinking is extremely bad for the health and performance of an athlete, and drinking more than 2 units a day will adversely effect performance and increase the risk of heart disease and most cancers. Long-term health risks aside, when we binge drink our capacity to regenerate type II muscle fiber (**the fast twitch type**) is compromised for up to 72 hours afterwards. This means less strength, less power, less performance, and a less aesthetic looking body. Alcohol is severely dehydrating, acting as a diuretic causing the body to loose water (for every pint drunk approximately 1/2 pint of extra water from the body's reserves is expelled, resulting in dehydration. A dehydrated athlete will perform poorly. As an athlete it is difficult enough to stay adequately hydrated without worrying about excessive alcohol consumption. Binge drinking or drinking to excess means you are likely to stand still in terms of fitness and lean tissue production for the 3 days following. Multiply that over a season and you can see the effects that this could have on your performance and your health as well as to the team.

So if you are a regular drinker and drink more than suggested guidelines or drink your total weekly allowance on one day of the week, the message is simple: **JUST CUT DOWN**. Yeah, yeah but its good fun and you can get lashed and sometimes laid - not that you remember - and you're young and wild etc Ok we understand but just try the following:

- ❖ **Never binge drink, especially 3 days before a big game**
- ❖ **Stick to no more than 2 units of alcohol each day (1 unit is either one measure of spirits, 1 125ml glass of wine, or 1/2 pint of lager)**

- ❖ never drink on an empty stomach.
- ❖ Try to consume one glass of water for each glass of alcohol - so it looks like you are drinking loads but you're not.
- ❖ Have alcohol free days - especially before games.
- ❖ Supplement your diet with the appropriate nutrients to ensure good detoxification and replenishment of nutrients lost during alcohol consumption such as plenty of vitamin C.

It's not all bad news though In France, alcoholic drinks in moderation seem to discourage heart disease, with the French enjoying a low incidence of heart disease despite a relatively high consumption of saturated fat. They seem to have an aversion to Snakebite though. However the take home message is that if you are already a moderate drinker you can continue to enjoy the potential health giving effects of alcohol consumption, whilst remembering that excessive drinking is particularly bad for your health and may cause liver disease and heart damage. If you do want to continue to pour the beer down your neck here's our guide to limit the damage:

Make sure you are adequately hydrated before you go out -

- ❖ this means having consumed around 2 liters of water throughout the day.
- ❖ This is particularly important if you have just been playing a match and intend to go out as a team afterwards. Weighing yourself before and after a game will tell you roughly how much water you have lost.
- ❖ As a general rule for each half a kilo of bodyweight lost aim to consume 500ml of fluids (ideally water but some fluid replacement drinks may be suitable).
- ❖ Have a soft drink in the first round · Drink water in between each alcoholic drink
- ❖ Drink plenty of fluids before you go to bed
- ❖ Drink plenty of fluids when you wake up and before you reach for tea, coffee or juice