

## 10 things that can happen to your body when you give up alcohol

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- Giving up alcohol can benefit your skin, liver, and other parts of your body.
  - You won't see changes immediately.
  - When you stop drinking for a brief period, you're more likely to make more informed eating choices and drink less in the long term.
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If you've ever given up drinking [alcohol](#), you likely felt different; research has shown that organs including the skin and liver get healthier when you stop drinking.

To find out how the body reacts when we give up alcohol, INSIDER consulted experts in gastroenterology and nutrition. Here's what they said.

### **Giving up alcohol can support brain-tissue growth**

People who consistently drink large quantities of alcohol can develop [a deficiency in thiamine, or vitamin B1](#). Vitamin B1 supports the growth of tissues in the body, including brain tissue, which means a deficiency can contribute to memory problems.

However, research has found that [not all alcohol-related brain damage is permanent](#). Human brains can grow new neurons into adulthood, and, according to a study conducted at the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, abstaining from chronic alcohol consumption can also foster the [growth of new brain cells](#).

### **Your liver will be healthier**

It's common knowledge that alcohol is bad for your liver. Excessive, long-term drinking can harm the organ, which [transforms glucose into fat](#) before distributing it around the body. If someone drinks more alcohol than their liver can handle, [fat can collect in the liver](#) and it can become inflamed and permanently scarred.

Cutting out alcoholic beverages can reduce your chance of developing liver disease.

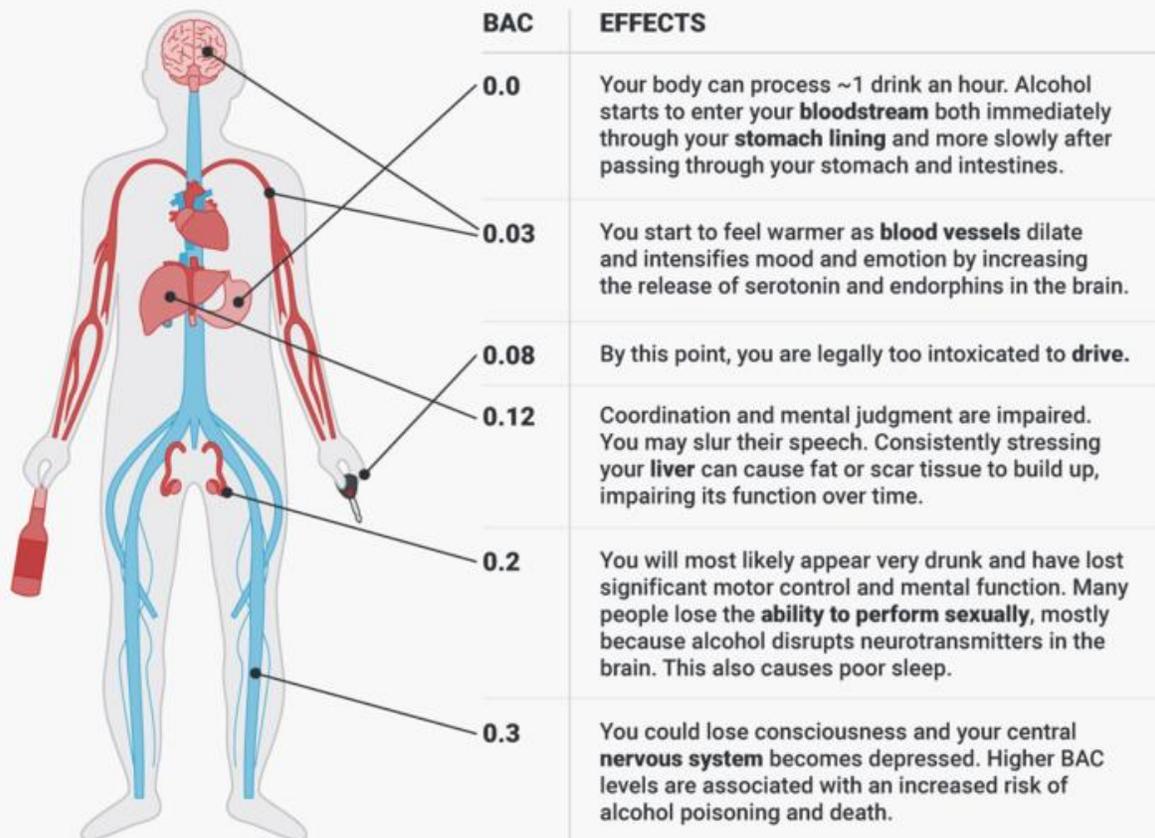
Read more: [Here's what happens to your brain when you get blackout drunk](#)

### **Eliminating alcohol can improve the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut**

According to Niket Sonpal, an adjunct assistant professor of clinical medicine at [Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine](#), alcohol can disrupt the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut, causing illnesses such as thyroid disease and immunity issues.

"When we have more than three drinks within a two-hour period, we are compromising our gut health," Sonpal told INSIDER. "While a glass of wine or beer with dinner may be OK, we start to see more damage when people binge drink and, of course, when there's full alcoholism."

## HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN/BODY AS YOU DRINK



**NOTE:** Factors including individual variation, gender, physiology (i.e. – presence of food, metabolism, fitness, genetics and drug use) might affect how you process alcohol. Some people with a high BAC may appear to be much more sober than they are.

SOURCES: NIAAA.gov; Johns Hopkins University; Brown University Wellness Center

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### It can improve overall digestive health

By removing alcohol from your diet, you can reduce the likelihood of developing acid reflux and gastritis, or stomach inflammation.

"The digestive system works hard to eliminate alcohol (a toxin) from our system," Sonpal said. "So when we cut out alcohol we are allowing the digestive system to better convert the food and beverages we consume into fuel, energy for us to function optimally."

### You might sleep better

Habitual drinking or even occasional heavy drinking can [interrupt your sleep cycle](#). When you drink before bed, you're more likely to spend time in non-rapid-

eye-movement sleep rather than in the more restorative rapid-eye-movement sleep.

"Alcohol may seem to be helping you to sleep, as it helps induce sleep, but overall it is more disruptive to sleep, particularly in the second half of the night," Irshaad Ebrahim, the medical director at The London Sleep Centre, [told WebMD](#). "Alcohol also suppresses breathing and can precipitate sleep apnea," or pauses in breathing that happen throughout the night.

### **Giving up alcohol can help your skin clear up**

Alcohol, a diuretic, dehydrates the body. [Other dermatologic ramifications](#) range from inflammation and an increased risk of rosacea to nutrient deficiencies that can affect the skin.

But if you stop drinking, you won't see results overnight. After a day, you'll likely still experience the effects of dehydration, including blotchy skin. According to [Sonya Dakar](#), a celebrity aesthetician and the founder of the Sonya Dakar Skin Clinic, it could take a week for your skin to look dewy and healthy again.

Because staying alcohol-free for extended periods of time will increase the health of your liver, your liver will be able to better help your skin.

"Over one year of not drinking alcohol, your liver will be healthier and better at detoxifying your body," Tess Mauricio, a board-certified dermatologist, [previously told INSIDER](#). "The healthier you are, the more beautiful your skin looks, so our skin will be more healthy and glowing."

### **It's easier to make informed eating choices when you're not drinking**

Drinking alcohol lowers our inhibitions, allowing us to make less informed food choices. It's common to fill up on liquid calories and carbs after a night out because alcohol doesn't keep us full.

"When we drink, it tends to make us lose our motivation or remember our why for our healthy choices," Whitney Stuart, a registered dietitian and the founder of [Whitness Nutrition](#), told INSIDER. "When we're not making those decisions, we have a clear mind, and we clearly know when we're hungry and can clearly hear our body's hunger signals without drinking."

## Cutting out alcohol can help you lose weight

If you're trying to slim down, eliminating alcohol could help you keep the pounds off.

"Alcohol does act like a fat once it's been metabolized," Bonnie Taub-Dix, a registered dietitian and the author of "[Read It Before You Eat It](#)," told INSIDER. "Part of losing weight is also looking at a healthier lifestyle. A lot of people don't consider the calories in alcohol again because they're not chewing, because it doesn't seem like it's rich and fatty and buttery."

While not every alcoholic beverage is equally caloric, the calories in mixed drinks such as martinis and daiquiris can add up.

## People who give up alcohol briefly tend to drink less in the long term

A study sponsored by the BBC found that heavy drinkers who gave up alcohol for a month were more likely to [reduce their drinking when the month was up](#). However, lighter drinkers who participated in the study returned to their previous drinking patterns.

<https://www.thisinsider.com/what-happens-to-your-body-when-you-give-up-alcohol-2019-2>