

Avoiding hangovers.

The best way to avoid a hangover is of course not to overindulge – don't drink more than your body can cope with. Generally speaking, hangover cures are a myth. There are no cures for a hangover but there are things you can do to avoid one, and if you do have one, ways to ease the discomfort. Dehydration causes many of the symptoms of a hangover.



What is a hangover?

The symptoms of a hangover vary from person to person, but they usually include a headache, nausea, tiredness and dehydration. Dehydration is one of the main causes of hangover symptoms.

A hangover can leave you struggling to concentrate, feeling irritable and sensitive to light.

The main cause of a hangover is ethanol – the alcohol in your drinks. It's a toxic chemical that works in the body as a diuretic, which means it makes you pee more and you can become dehydrated as a result.

Tips to avoid a hangover.

Before you go out:

- Set yourself a limit
- Eat a substantial meal that includes carbohydrates. The food will help slow down your body's absorption of alcohol
- Drink plenty of water

When you are out:

- Avoid getting into rounds
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with still soft drinks or water (fizzy drinks speed up the body's absorption of alcohol)
- Avoid mixing drinks
- Don't drink dark coloured drinks if you're sensitive to them – they contain natural chemicals called congeners which irritate blood vessels and tissue in the brain and can make a hangover worse
- Your body takes about one hour to process each unit of alcohol. Consider stopping drinking well before the end of the evening, so the process can begin before you go to bed and the chances of suffering a hangover the following day are kept to a minimum.

When you get home:

- Drink a pint or so of water before you go to sleep. Keep a glass of water by the bed to sip if you wake up in the night. Before you go to sleep is the best time to rehydrate
- Get as much sleep as possible

Dealing with a hangover.

Deal with a hangover by rehydrating to help deal with the painful symptoms. Replace fluids by drinking bland liquids that are easy on the digestive system, such as water, soda water and isotonic drinks.

Top up depleted sources with a bouillon soup – a thin vegetable-based broth which has a good source of vitamins and minerals and is easy for the stomach to digest.

Sugary foods may make you feel less trembly, but some people may need an antacid to settle their stomach first

Avoid 'hair of the dog'. Drinking more alcohol does not help and drinking in the morning is a risky habit.

If you've had a heavy drinking session, with or without a hangover, medical advice is to wait at least 48 hours before drinking any more alcohol to give your body time to recover.

Low risk drinking advice if you regularly drink on a weekly basis.

Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week

Spread your 14 units over 3 or more days in any one week

Try to have several drink free days a week

14 units is the equivalent of 7 pints of lower strength (3.6%) beer or 7 medium (175ml) glasses of average-strength (12%) wine.



Further information, resources and advice can be found at

www.drinkaware.co.uk