

“Sohaila Says”

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Q How much of an impact does drinking alcohol have on my diet? If I eat really clean, can't I have a few drinks?

A How alcohol impacts your health and weight is largely dependent on how much you have, and your overall calorie balance. First, let's define a standard alcoholic “drink:”

- 12 ounces of beer
- 8 ounces of malt liquor
- 5 ounces of wine
- 1.5 ounces or a “shot” of 80-proof liquor

Our nation's obesity level is an indication of how difficult moderation is, though moderate alcohol intake can be part of a healthy diet. Moderate drinking is defined as up to one drink for a woman, and up to two for a man daily. According to the most recent Gallup poll, of those who consume alcohol, most report having about four drinks per week. Though this is considered moderate, keep in mind that the calories have to be burned off or they will be stored by your body as fat until there is a different purpose for them (exercise fuel), and most typically around the waist...“the beer gut.”

Research shows that drinking even a moderate amount of alcohol impacts the number of servings you eat – thus, more calories to burn off. Most Americans already have stored calories in the form of fat to burn off at workouts without adding on those four weekly drinks! So, the question to ask is, “Is worth it?” For many of my female clients, learning of the 50% increased breast cancer risk with

