



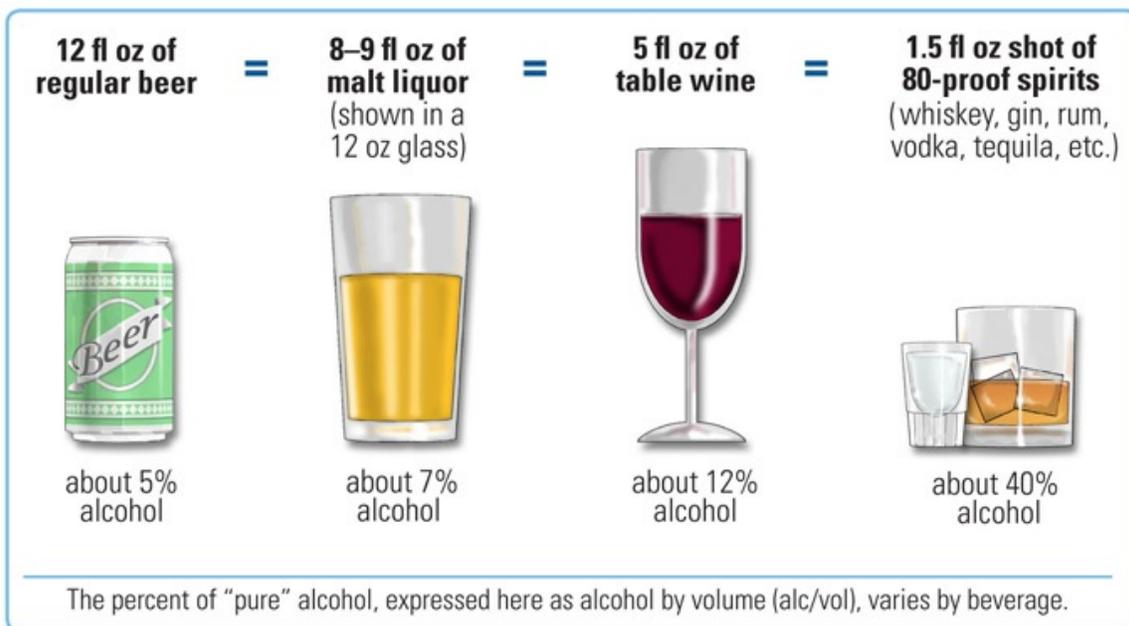
# Diabetes and Alcohol Use

Have you wondered how alcohol can affect diabetes? Many people with diabetes can tolerate small to moderate amounts of alcohol, but it's best to consult your Diabetes Care Team before you assume it's okay for you.

## The effect alcohol has on blood sugars

- Normally the liver converts stored carbohydrates into glucose to be used for energy if your blood glucose is getting low. When alcohol is consumed, the liver gets rid of all the alcohol in the blood stream before releasing more stored glucose, possibly resulting in low sugars.
- Alcohol itself can actually put diabetics at risk for low blood sugars, be sure to consume alcohol with a meal or a snack and avoid drinking on an empty stomach.
- If you drink alcohol with added sweeteners or mixers such as a margarita, or with cola or other sodas, this can cause a big spike in blood sugars once the alcohol is out of your system.
- For women, limit yourself to 1 alcoholic drink per day and for men, limit yourself to up to 2 drinks daily.

**See the chart for information on what is considered "1 alcoholic beverage."**



## Tips to follow if you choose to drink

- Do not replace meals with drinking alcohol to cut out the calories
- If you are counting carbs, do not count alcohol as a carb choice since it may actually cause hypoglycemia.
- Choose a calorie free mixer if you are having a mixed drink
- Stay hydrated while drinking by having a non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated beverage in addition to your alcohol
- Don't forget that alcoholic beverages contain lots of calories, especially those with added sugars or those that you may mix with other sweetened beverages. If you are watching your weight or trying to lose weight, it may be best to cut out alcoholic beverages or only consume them for special occasions.
- Practice caution and drink slowly. Do not plan to drive for several hours.

## Resources

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/drinks.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html)

[www.joslin.org](http://www.joslin.org)

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/what-standard-drink>