

Alcohol on Diet

My friend recently asked me why I don't drink alcohol anymore. I've not had a drink since January 4th. This date is not particularly significant however my reasons are.

Between around mid- November and 1st January I managed to gain 6kg or 13lb. This is a drastic weight gain considering I had not anticipated it. At first I thought it must be down to training harder. But then I realised I hadn't been training hard at all.

This country has a reputation for being the binge drinking capital of Europe and this drinking culture costs the economy around £20 Billion per year through anti-social behaviour, alcohol related crime and of course the massive strain it puts on the NHS.

In my last blog I wrote that you shouldn't drink your daily calories, and that you can have one cheat meal a week when trying to conform to a strict diet. However far too many people are not following these guidelines.

The government advisors recommend a man should have no more than 21 units a week and for women only 14. When we consider that a pint of strong lager is 3 units and a large glass of wine (250ml) is 4 units, these mount up very quickly, particularly among the binge culture.

The reason you shouldn't drink alcoholic calories is purely because they have no nutritional value. It is thought that a small glass of red wine can be good for the heart, because the grapes made to produce it are packed with anti-oxidants.

In one pint of lager there are around 256 calories. This amounts to around 10% of a man's recommended daily allowance. If the average male on a night out has 5 pints of lager that's half his RDA of calories purely on alcohol, plus any food consumed too. So anyone who is undertaking a calorie controlled diet should think twice before drinking.

Alcohol also affects balance and coordination so there are more reports of accidents and falls while intoxicated. As alcohol is a depressant research has shown that it can lead to self harm particularly amongst teens. This increases the cost to the already overstretched NHS.

But its not only the government and the individual that alcohol affects, a recent study by the Prime Ministers strategy unit shows 17 million working days are lost to hangovers and drink-related illness each year.

Whilst most of you who read this may think that the above statistics don't include yourselves I think this issue is particularly relevant around the coming months, most notably on the festival of Purim in March. I know I will be shutting Kosher Fitness over this festival partly because I don't think anyone would want to come and also for health and safety reasons.

In conclusion I would say that yes it is ok to drink every now and then, but when you lose control it not only puts your own life in danger but those around you too, as well as having long term damaging effects on your health.