

# Alcohol and Athlete Performance

## Athlete Scenario

*I play intramural basketball and enjoy going out for drinks with my teammates after games and on weekends. Before I started drinking, I didn't notice problems with stamina. Now I am easily winded and prone to muscle cramps. Is this normal? Is alcohol affecting my game?*

## Nutrition Goals & Recommendations

- If you are an adult of legal drinking age, prioritize rehydration and refueling after training and competition prior to consuming alcohol
- Maintain social life without compromising training and competition goals
- If consuming alcohol, follow the guidelines for moderate alcohol intake: no more than 1-2 drinks per day for men, 1 drink per day for women
- One "drink" equals 12 oz. of regular beer, 5 oz. wine or 1.5 oz. of 80-proof liquor.

## Alcohol's Impact on Athletic Performance

### Short-Term Effects:

- Acts as a diuretic, increasing urine fluid loss and impacting hydration
- Interferes with post-exercise recovery by reducing muscle glycogen replenishment and impairing muscle protein synthesis

### Long-Term Effects of Over-Consumption:

- May increase oxidative stress impacting immune system function
- Increases the risk for nutrient deficiencies by interfering with vitamin and mineral absorption
- Provides 7 kcal/g, which can result in increased caloric intake and unwanted weight gain over time
- Interferes with sleep patterns by reducing time spent in deep, restful sleep
- May increase the odds of addiction

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs) to provide nutrition guidance. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. Contact a SCAN RD for personalized nutrition plans. Access "Find a SCAN RD" at [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org) or by phone at 800.249.2875.

## Tips to Take With You

1. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, consume them in moderation.
2. Focus on meeting nutrition needs for refueling and recovery before drinking alcohol.
3. Consult with a registered dietitian nutritionist or other healthcare professional if you are concerned about your alcohol intake.

## Contact SCAN

[www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)  
800.249.2875

