



How Alcohol Disrupts Sleep



Many people think a drink before bed helps them sleep, but alcohol actually *reduces* overall sleep quality. Even small amounts can interfere with your brain's natural sleep cycle and leave you feeling tired the next day.

How alcohol disrupts sleep:

1. It makes you fall asleep faster but not better

Alcohol acts as a sedative at first, which is why people may feel sleepy. This effect is temporary. As your body begins to process the alcohol, your brain becomes more alert, which could lead to lighter sleep and waking up during the night.

2. It blocks deep sleep and REM sleep

Deep sleep is the stage of sleep where your body repairs muscles, strengthens your immune system, and organizes basic memories. It usually happens earlier in the night and is the most restful stage. Alcohol reduces the amount of time you spend in deep sleep, making you feel tired the next morning and limits recovery.

Another important stage is REM sleep, which helps with learning, emotions, and mental health, and it usually occurs later in the night in longer periods. REM sleep is when your brain is highly active during sleep. Alcohol delays REM sleep and reduces the total amount you get, which can make you feel mentally foggy and moody the next day. When alcohol wears off, your brain tries to catch up on REM sleep, causing vivid dreams, night sweats, and frequent waking. Both stages are essential—deep sleep repairs your body, while REM sleep refreshes your mind, and alcohol disrupts both.

3. It causes more wakeups and sleep apnea

As the effects of alcohol wear off, your body becomes more alert, increasing your heart rate and brain activity. This can cause restlessness and waking up several times during the night. Alcohol also causes dehydration which increases bathroom visits and interrupts sleep. In addition, alcohol relaxes the throat muscles, leading to snoring and making sleep apnea symptoms more severe. Sleep apnea is a condition in which a person briefly stops breathing many times during sleep, causing poor sleep and low oxygen levels.



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Mocktail: The “Calm Drift Cooler”

A simple, refreshing drink that supports relaxation without the negative sleep effects. This hydrating drink is low in sugar and contains tart cherry juice, which naturally supports melatonin production and ginger which helps with digestion. Since it contains no alcohol, it helps promote deeper restorative sleep.

Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup(118ml) of tart or cherry juice (check the nutrition labels for a low sugar option)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup(118ml) of sparkling or still water
- 1 tbsp (15ml) fresh lemon juice
- Optional: Small piece of ginger (helps digestion)
- Ice
- Mint or lemon slice for garnish

Instructions

1. Fill a glass with ice.
2. Add tart cherry juice and lemon juice.
3. Top with sparkling or still water.
4. Stir gently.
5. Add ginger, mint, or a lemon slice if you want extra flavour.

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