

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 cycles and leave you feeling less rested 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. But this effect is temporary. As your body metabolizes alcohol, your brain becomes more alert, leading to lighter, more fragmented sleep later in the night.

2. It Blocks Deep Sleep and REM Sleep

Deep sleep is the stage where your body repairs muscle, boosts immune function, and consolidates memory. REM sleep is crucial for learning, mental health, and emotional regulation. Alcohol severely suppresses REM in the first half of the night and causes a rebound effect later; leading to vivid dreams, night sweats, or waking up frequently. Alcohol reduces the amount of time you spend in these restorative stages, making you feel groggy or unrefreshed the next morning.

4. It Causes More Wakeups and can Trigger Sleep Apnea

As alcohol wears off, your nervous system “rebounds,” increasing heart rate and brain activity. This often leads to waking up multiple times and restlessness. Alcohol also causes dehydration which increases bathroom visits and interrupts sleep. In addition, alcohol relaxes throat muscles, increasing snoring and making sleep apnea symptoms more severe; even in people who don't normally snore.

To support better sleep without alcohol, here's a relaxing, sleep-friendly mocktail you can enjoy instead:



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Sleep-Friendly Mocktail: A simple, refreshing drink that supports relaxation without the negative sleep effects.

Ingredients

- ½ cup tart cherry juice (natural source of melatonin)
- ½ cup sparkling water or still water
- 1 tbsp 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 water.
4. Stir gently.
5. Add ginger, mint, or a lemon slice if you want extra flavor.

Tart cherry juice naturally supports melatonin production, the drink is hydrating and low in sugar, and because it contains no alcohol, it helps promote deeper, more restorative sleep.

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