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Articles:

LA Times Today: Can Dry January lead to 'mindful drinking'?



What a month of no drinking can do for your health



Dry months: a popular way to reclaim control



Substance Misuse Prevention Newsletter: A Collection of Readings

Benefits of a “Dry” Month



Brief Overview

‘Dry January’ is a public health campaign that originated in the UK in 2013 (Russell et al., 2022). The goal of those who choose to participate is to temporarily abstain from alcohol during the month of January. Some see it as an attainable new year’s resolution, while others find that it leads to a new habit of mindful drinking. Prior studies have shown that participation in Dry January has resulted in short-term and long-term benefits. These benefits include a reduction in alcohol consumption, an increase in alcohol refusal skills, saving money, improved sleep, increased energy, weight loss, and enhancement in overall psychological wellbeing (Russell et al., 2022). Because of these benefits, the trend has become increasingly popular since its inception.

Health Benefits of an Alcohol-Free Month:

-Improved nutritional intake

-More satisfying sleep

-Healthier vital signs and organ function

-Stronger immune system

-Clearer thinking

-Better control over weight and physical fitness

-Increased energy

A Few Tips for a Dry Month

(Renaissance Recovery, 2024)

Tip 1: Start Journaling

Regular journaling can improve mental health. It may help to journal about your reasons for abstaining from alcohol for a month. A journal of your experience can also help you to document any health improvements that you may be noticing.

Tip 2: Develop New Coping Skills

Using the technique of “distraction and delay” can help cope with cravings. Distracting yourself with healthy coping mechanisms for stress such as mindfulness, meditation, or yoga can help to destress without having something to drink.

Tip 3: Switch Up Routine

When attempting to change a habit, changing your daily routine can be helpful. The desire for an alcoholic drink can be triggered by environmental cues, and it can be helpful to understand what those may be in order to make adjustments.

Tip 4: Do it with a Friend

Having an accountability partner may be helpful if you anticipate that a sober month may be challenging for you. Additionally, having a sober companion for social outings can be beneficial.

For comments on this newsletter or suggestions for future articles please contact: Diane Geyer LCPC, LADC, CCS, NCC~ Director of Training or Mary Furlong, Graduate Assistant~ Email: diane.geyer@maine.edu or mary.furlong@maine.edu