

# INSPIRED

## To Make Healthy Choices

**Athletes work very hard to improve their performance through practice and team play, whether they are playing on a club team and/or representing their school.**

To reap the benefits of their training programs, athletes must consume proper foods and beverages in order to repair muscle tissue, hydrate the body and restore/replace fuel sources in the liver and muscles.

**It is incredibly important that athletes stay away from drinking any alcohol in order to continually improve their performance** and maintain the benefits of their training. Choosing to abuse proper nutrition by consuming alcohol, whether it is 'binge drinking' or 'casual drinking' following workout days or competitive events will have a negative effect on performance.

Most athletes know never to drink before a meet or a game, but to what extent is alcohol use preventing them from reaching their fullest potential and achieving their team goals?

Athletes, parents and coaches, did you know that:

- Alcohol is a performance impairing drug and
- Athletes who drink alcohol are TWICE as likely to be injured.

This means that drinking alcohol will not allow you to be the best you can be as an athlete and it may land you a spot on the injured list.

**Many athletes underestimate the impact of alcohol on their bodies and how long the impact lasts.** Here are just a few facts to consider before having an alcoholic drink at an upcoming party or get-together.

Alcohol:

- Slows reaction time up to 72 hours;
- Inhibits brain's ability to learn and store new information;
- Decreases hand-eye coordination;
- Disrupts sleep and attention; and
- Increases fat storage.

Alcohol use also impacts the body in specific ways when athletes use it.

Alcohol:

- Impairs muscle growth;
- Dehydrates the body;
- Inhibits absorption of nutrients;
- Prevents muscle recovery;
- Depletes energy and negatively impacts endurance; and
- Impairs heat regulation.

Choosing NOT to drink alcohol will enable athletes to eliminate the longer term negative impact alcohol has on their bodies. Additionally, this decision will also make the following less likely:

- Injuries
- Poor choices, such as getting in a car with someone who drank alcohol
- DUI
- Loss of scholarships
- Depression
- Other high risk choices

Athletes can increase their team's success in competition by not drinking in-season. They can also improve their strength and performance during the off-season by choosing not to drink alcohol.

**Make the healthy choice of NOT drinking alcohol. It will make a big difference in how your body performs during practices and competition events!**

Alcohol causes dehydration and slows down the body's ability to heal.

Alcohol impairs the development of muscles.

Alcohol interferes with the way your body makes energy.

Alcohol is high in sugar and contains a lot of calories.

For more information:  
**Alcohol:  
Impact On  
Athletes**  
www.guideinc.org

