Surviving the festive season

Get in training....

- Try to bank some sleep and focus on eating as healthily as you can now and in between party days so you can afford a bit of leeway on nights out
- Aim to give yourself at least 2 or 3 completely alcohol free days per week

When out on the town

1. Don’t go out on an empty stomach.

Having food in your stomach reduces how high your peak alcohol concentration gets by up to 30%. Alcohol also irritates the stomach lining and causes an increase in stomach acid production. Having food in the stomach will help to reduce this.

Ideally eat something an hour before going out. Try to include some fats as these take a little longer to digest. Ideas include wholegrain bread with peanut butter, wholegrain pasta with pesto or even full fat yoghurt with berries.

2. Stay hydrated.

Alcohol is a diuretic. It causes our kidneys to send water straight to the bladder rather than reabsorbing it, making us pee more. In fact we can lose up to 4 times as much liquid as we consume and minerals like potassium can also be flushed out.

Dehydration is usually the cause of the headache that comes with a hangover. Help your liver and kidneys by drinking a glass of water between each alcoholic drink or if you drink white wine, try having spritzers. Always end a night out with a pint or two of water.

3. Avoid mixing your drinks and stick to lighter coloured drinks.

Chemicals produced during the fermentation process called congeners are thought to make hangover symptoms worse. These are found in higher quantity in red wine and darker spirits like brandy and whiskey. Congeners from different drinks can react with each other and make you feel even worse, so stick to one type of drink, ideally lighter in colour and avoid lots of cocktails.

4. Slow down.

Your liver can only process about ½ oz of alcohol (one standard drink measure) per hour and some people can manage much less. So pace yourself. Not overdoing it is the best way to avoid a massive hangover.
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The morning after

There are lots of so-called hangover remedies and old wife’s tales, from burnt toast to pickled herrings in Germany. The ‘hair of the dog’ is just prolonging the inevitable. In reality, there is no miracle cure, except time. However, there are a few things that can help – or hinder – symptoms.

What to avoid

- Limit caffeine. Too much caffeine will only add to dehydration and give your liver more work to do. Green tea is a better option than coffee
- Avoid painkillers if you can. Paracetemol needs to be metabolised by your already overworked liver. While anti-inflammatory action of aspirin should help some symptoms, it can cause stomach irritation

What may help

- B vitamins are needed by your liver to process and detoxify alcohol so taking a B complex or a good multivitamin that contains b vitamins like Revive Active can help
- Vitamin C can also help to protect your liver after drinking alcohol. Try eating some fresh fruit or drinking a smoothie
- Fatigue is often exacerbated by low blood sugar, a rebound effect from alcohol. So eat something! Eggs are high in cysteine, an amino acid thought to help break down toxic by-products of alcohol. Try poached eggs, tomatoes and a wholegrain bagel or scrambled eggs and smoked salmon
- If eggs feel like a step too far, drink a smoothie to prop up blood sugar levels and rehydrate. Include
  - Coconut water – full of natural electrolytes, to help restore hydration and mineral levels, especially potassium
  - Fresh ginger – helps reduce nausea
  - Pineapple or berries – good source of vitamin C
  - Banana & avocado – contain potassium
- If you can’t even face that, then sipping hot water with lemon and fresh ginger or mint can help quell nausea and hydrate
- Get some exercise or even a walk in fresh air. This will help boost circulation and increase the elimination of alcohol

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