

Rock 'n' roll doc offers tips for avoiding — and curing — hangovers

By: Rachel Nania



A holistic doctor to rock 'n' roll legends offers advice for making healthier choices at your end-of-the-year bash, as well as hangover cures in case your antics lead to a night of overindulging.

WASHINGTON — For 30 years, naturopathic doctor Gabrielle Francis traveled and toured with some of the world's biggest bands — we're talking Mötley Crüe, Aerosmith and Jane's Addiction — all to help keep the stars healthy while on the road.

So it's safe to say she knows a few things about partying — and righting the course after a night of too much. Just in time for New Year's Eve, Francis has some tips to help you “party smart” at your end-of-the-year bash — and some hangover cures, should you choose to ignore her advice.

Alternate alcohol

You don't need to skip the spirits at your party, but Francis does recommend scaling back — especially if you're at an event that lasts several hours.

Her favorite trick is to alternate between an alcoholic beverage and a nonalcoholic beverage, such as bitters and tonic.

“Bitters is actually an herbal mixture that really supports your digestion,” says Francis, author of “The Rockstar Remedy.” And ironically, the botanical ingredients found in many bitters products are also good for your liver.

“And it's very cheap too,” she says, adding that the \$2 drink will be a welcome change to all those \$14 craft cocktails on your bar tab at the end of the night.

Go gluten-free

Even if you don't have an allergy or a gluten sensitivity, Francis says going gluten-free is the way to go when you're out on the town. Potato- or grape-based gins, sake, and potato- or corn-based vodkas are more distilled than grain-based alcohols, so they're cleaner and easier on your liver.

Plus, Francis says, cutting down on gluten will help put your stomach at ease the following morning.

If you're going out big, it's best to treat yourself. Francis says the higher-shelf liquors will lessen your chances of a horrible hangover.

Increase your buzz with less alcohol

Want to feel a buzz at the party, but don't want to drink too much? Just reach for the grapefruit juice.

“Grapefruit juice actually slows the metabolism of the alcohol, so it keeps it in the blood longer,” Francis says. “So the idea would be if you have a drink with a little grapefruit in it, then you could get double the buzz with half the alcohol. So that's definitely helpful for the next day.”

Opt for old-world wines

If wine is your drink-of-choice, consider pouring an organic variety or selecting a bottle from the old-world to cut down on the amount of toxins and pesticides.

“If you're drinking a lot of wine, you have to consider that this is one of the major sources of pesticides,” she says. “Old-world wine would be wine from Italy, Spain, France — places in the Mediterranean that do not use so many pesticides with their wine.”

Making the switch may not prevent a hangover, but it will help your health in the long run, since exposure to pesticides is linked to an increased risk for a number of diseases.

Skip the burger and fries: Soak up the alcohol with oatmeal

If greasy food is your post-party go-to, it's time to switch up your routine. Francis says the morning after drinking, you need to start the day with a little bit of protein — “something that will really kind of feel nourishing,” she says.

If you're turned off by the idea of eggs and bacon, Francis says oatmeal and other warm cereals help to soothe the stomach.

“And they also help to absorb the toxicity of the alcohol. And sometimes ... you don't feel like really eating a big egg breakfast.”

Pop the aspirin and a few other pills

Throwing back a few aspirin will help with your headache, but Francis says a few other supplements will get you on the road to a faster recovery. She recommends taking vitamin C and a B-complex vitamin.

Sipping on electrolyte-filled drinks throughout the day, such as coconut water, Emergen C and vegetable bouillon, will also help you spring back to life. And of course it goes without saying that the more water and herbal tea you can get down, the better.

“We deplete ourselves of all kinds of minerals when we drink because drinking dehydrates us,” Francis says. “The more water, herbal tea and electrolytes you have the next day, the sooner you're going to be able to get over your hangover.”