

# the RED CUP Q&A

separating alcohol fact from fiction

wildfact

Utah recently became the first state to lower the legal DUI limit to .05 BAC (blood alcohol concentration).

## How many drinks will get you to the .08 limit?

You may be surprised that just 2-4 drinks in one hour will land most drinkers above .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC). An individual's BAC depends on four factors: weight, gender, time, and strength of the drinks. While you **can** control how much and how fast you drink, weight and gender aren't changeable in one evening.

A standard drink is 12 ounces of beer or 4 ounces of wine or 1 ounce shot of 80 proof liquor (40% ethanol). Every standard drink that a 140 lb. woman consumes will raise her BAC .032. So, 3 drinks x .032 puts her at .096, which is over the legal DUI limit of .08 for those 21 and older. Every standard drink that a 180 lb. male consumes will raise his BAC .02. Four standard drinks would put him right at .08. To see how weight and gender affect BAC, see the tables to the right.

WOMEN	BAC/ drink	MEN	BAC/ drink
100 lbs.	.045	140 lbs.	.026
140 lbs.	.032	180 lbs.	.020
180 lbs.	.025	220 lbs.	.017

Why such a big difference in how alcohol affects men and women? Weight is a big factor. Females generally weigh less than men and have about 30% less alcohol dehydrogenase (the liver enzyme that metabolizes alcohol) than males. Men typically have more muscle mass than women – which helps dilute alcohol in the blood stream.

To stay safer when drinking alcohol, it's recommended that women limit themselves to one standard drink an hour and men limit drinks to one or two drinks per hour. With moderate drinking, you likely will have better times, better memories, and fewer regrets.

Got a question about alcohol? Email it to [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu)



[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)



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