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Review Alcohol Health Res World. 1998;22(3):211-9.

Consequences of alcohol use in diabetics

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Affiliations

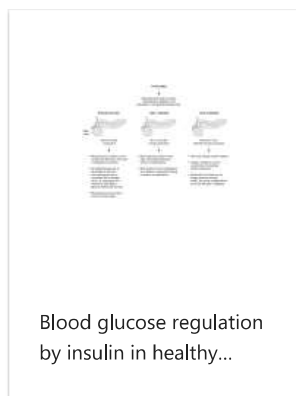
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Abstract

The hormone insulin, which is produced in the pancreas, is an important regulator of blood sugar levels. In people with diabetes, the pancreas does not produce sufficient insulin (type 1 diabetes) or the body does not respond appropriately to the insulin (type 2 diabetes). Alcohol consumption by diabetics can worsen blood sugar control in those patients. For example, long-term alcohol use in well-nourished diabetics can result in excessive blood sugar levels. Conversely, long-term alcohol ingestion in diabetics who are not adequately nourished can lead to dangerously low blood sugar levels. Heavy drinking, particularly in diabetics, also can cause the accumulation of certain acids in the blood that may result in severe health consequences. Finally, alcohol consumption can worsen diabetes-related medical complications, such as disturbances in fat metabolism, nerve damage, and eye disease.

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