Dear Alice,

We've noticed that students at our college are asking about these new over-the-counter hangover meds. As student health educators, we don't know where to go for more accurate information on this subject. Do you have any, or can you help us find it?

Thank you,
Curious Peer Educators

Answer

Dear Curious Peer Educators,

From Bloody Marys and barley grass to peanuts and painkillers, it might seem as though just about anything can be touted as a hangover helper. Although several studies have looked into a long list of these products, the only thing that seems to work all the time, every time, is, well, time! With luck, hangovers typically disappear between eight to 24 hours after they begin.

What we do know is that some things can actually make a hangover worse. These things include:

- Taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) after drinking alcohol (which can possibly harm the liver)
- Popping a couple of aspirin (again may not be a grand idea, as this could make a sour stomach even worse)
- Drinking a bit more alcohol, known as eating the hair of the dog that bit you (may help one feel better again in the short run, but this only prolongs the inevitable hangover)

On the plus side, there are few ways to help diminish (but not instantly cure) a hangover, such as:

- Drinking a lot of water. Alcohol acts as a diuretic driving water out of the body, thus causing dehydration, you'll need all the water you can stomach to recover more quickly.
- Eating! Sticking to protein and complex carbohydrates such as eggs and toast may help settle your stomach.
- Getting rest. Hopefully the hangover will be gone by the time you wake up.

Of course, the only foolproof way to avoid getting a hangover is not drinking any alcoholic beverages at all. If that's not in your game plan, check out Avoid Hangover [2] in the Go Ask Alice! Q&A archives and the Related Q&A below for more tips on pre-party planning that won't
leave you hurting the morning after.

Cheers,

Alice!

Category:
Alcohol & Other Drugs [3]
Prescription & Over-the-Counter-Drugs [4]

Related questions

Hangover helper and tips for healthy drinking [5]
Help for friends who drink too much [6]
No hangovers = problem? [7]
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