

Live Well,
Work Well



January 2025

Dry January: Are You In?



As the holidays end, some people give up alcohol in what's known as "Dry January." The monthlong wellness challenge can serve as a reset after overindulging during the holidays or as an opportunity to reassess one's relationship with alcohol. While a month of sobriety can seem overwhelming to some, it can provide multiple advantages.

Alcohol can also contribute to various health conditions, such as high blood pressure, kidney or liver problems, heart disease and certain cancers. Furthermore, a study published in JAMA Network Open reported that alcohol consumption is a leading preventable cause of death in the United States. As such, a period of sobriety can positively affect one's well-being and overall health.

One out of 4 Americans completed Dry January in 2024, according to a CivicScience tracking poll.

People may experience health-related benefits when taking a brief break from moderate to heavy alcohol consumption. Dry January participants often report sleeping better, having higher energy levels, being in a better mood and feeling more focused. Some also experience weight loss and clearer skin.

Tips for a Successful Dry January

The goal of Dry January is to consciously drink less, even if you don't give up alcohol fully. Consider these tips for a successful month without alcohol:

- Think about potential challenges during the month, such as social events or stress triggers, so you can plan how you'll handle these situations without alcohol.
- Stay busy and engage in activities that don't involve drinking. You may discover a new hobby, exercise more or spend quality time with others in alcohol-free settings.
- Stock up on nonalcoholic beverages that you enjoy. Many great options include sparkling water, functional sodas, mocktails, and nonalcoholic beers and wines.
- Let friends and family know about your goal so they can offer support or even join you.
- Pay attention to the positive health and mental changes you notice, as they can reinforce your commitment.

Participating in Dry January can be a great way to start the new year on a healthy note. If you have any questions or concerns about your alcohol consumption, talk to a health care professional.

Protect Your Skin During the Winter

The changing of the seasons can impact your skin. Specifically, winter weather brings colder and less humid conditions, leaving your skin prone to issues such as dryness. Dry skin symptoms can include itchiness, flakiness, redness, cracking and bleeding. Dry skin may not seem like the most concerning health problem, but not treating dry skin can result in itchiness, cracked or painful skin, eczema and dermatitis.

The following tips can help care for your skin during the winter months:

- **Adjust your shower routine.** The length and temperature of your showers can make a big difference in the dryness of your skin. Long and hot showers during the cold months can strip the natural oils in your skin, drying it out. Try short and cold showers instead.
- **Use moisturizer.** Applying moisturizer, especially after showering, can help keep your skin hydrated and prevent dryness.
- **Avoid products with fragrances.** Often, the better a product smells, the more irritating it can be for your skin. As such, consider choosing fragrance-free skin products and laundry detergents.
- **Use a humidifier.** Humidifiers can return moisture to the air in your home, helping prevent and relieve environmental dryness.
- **Stay hydrated.** Make sure you're drinking enough water throughout the day to improve the appearance of your skin and make it less susceptible to drying out.

Contact your doctor if you have any skin concerns.

January Is National Blood Donor Month

Winter is one of the most difficult times of the year to collect enough blood products and donations to meet patient needs. That's why National Blood Donor Month is celebrated every January.

Someone in the United States needs blood or platelets every two seconds, according to the American Red Cross.

It's vital to have plenty of blood banked to meet the demand. Blood is needed for surgeries, traumatic injuries, cancer treatment and chronic illnesses. On a daily basis, roughly 29,000 units of red blood cells, 5,000 units of platelets and 6,500 units of plasma are required. Blood and platelets cannot be made synthetically, so voluntary donations are necessary.

Consider the following health benefits of donating blood regularly:

- **Health problem detection**—Donated blood is tested to determine if there are any irregularities. You must also undergo a quick health screening before giving blood.
- **Heart disease risk reduction**—Donating can help eliminate any excess buildup of iron in the blood, which can lower blood pressure and the risk of a heart attack.
- **Caloric burn**—The blood donation process typically burns up to 650 calories.

Before you roll up your sleeve and commit to being a regular blood donor, check if you meet the American Red Cross' [requirements](#) to donate blood safely.

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

JANUARY 2025



4 Mental Health Benefits of Dry January

Dry January is a popular wellness challenge where participants abstain from alcohol for the entire month. This initiative encourages people to take a break from drinking after the often-indulgent holiday season. The goal is to reassess one's relationship with alcohol and start the new year with a fresh perspective. Many people use the month of January to reflect on their drinking habits and make more mindful choices about alcohol consumption in the future.

While there are physical advantages to abstaining from alcohol, there are several mental health benefits of Dry January, including the following:

1. **Improved mood and mental clarity**—One of the most immediate benefits of Dry January is a boost in mood and mental clarity. Alcohol is a depressant that can negatively impact your mood and cognitive functions.
2. **Reduced anxiety and stress**—Alcohol can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and stress. Taking a break from drinking allows

your mind to reset, often resulting in reduced anxiety levels and a greater sense of calm.

3. **Increased confidence**—Completing Dry January can significantly boost self-esteem and confidence. Achieving this goal demonstrates self-control and commitment, which can translate into other areas of life.
4. **Better coping mechanisms**—By taking a break from alcohol, participants often find alternative ways to cope with stress and emotions. This can lead to the development of healthier coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness or exercise. These new strategies can have long-lasting positive effects on mental health.

Whether you're a regular drinker or someone who indulges occasionally, taking a month off from alcohol can provide valuable insights into your relationship with drinking and set the stage for a healthier, happier year ahead.

Building Good Mental Wellness Habits for the New Year

As a new year starts, many of us reflect on the past and set resolutions for the future. Although physical health goals often take center stage, focusing on mental wellness is equally important. Building good mental wellness habits can significantly enhance your quality of life, helping you navigate stress, improve relationships and achieve a greater sense of fulfillment.

Here are some strategies to support your mental well-being in the new year:

- **Prioritize quality shuteye.** Sleep affects mood, cognitive function and overall well-being. Aim for seven to nine hours of restful sleep each night so you're ready to take on each new day.
- **Incorporate self-care.** It's important to make time for self-care and activities that make you happy, so build them into your daily routine.
- **Limit screen time.** Frequent technology use can lead to feelings of isolation, difficulty focusing, tech

addiction and slower brain development. A digital detox can lower stress levels and improve self-image. Limiting screen time also allows you to be mindful of your online habits and form healthier offline routines.

- **Strive for progress, not perfection.** Focus on the journey and celebrate progress toward your goals. It's about doing your best and accepting that it's OK to make mistakes.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations. How you talk to yourself can significantly impact your mental health. Be kind to others and especially yourself.

The start of the new year is a perfect time to build good mental wellness habits. These can help you navigate the challenges of everyday life and enhance your overall quality of life. For further guidance or support, contact a mental health professional.



Meatball Soup

January 2025 Recipe

Makes: 4 servings



Ingredients

- 6 cups water
- ⅓ cup brown rice (uncooked)
- 3 bouillon cubes
(low-sodium chicken or beef flavored)
- 1 Tbsp. oregano
- 8 oz. 90% lean ground beef
(or turkey or chicken)
- 1 tomato (finely chopped)
- ½ onion (peeled and finely chopped)
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 cups vegetable mix
(carrots, celery and spinach, chopped)

Nutritional information for 1 serving

Calories	246
Total fat	7 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	82 mg
Sodium	420 mg
Carbohydrate	28 g
Dietary fiber	6 g
Total sugars	5 g
Added sugars included	0 g
Protein	17 g

Directions

1. In a large pot, combine the water, rice, bouillon cubes and oregano. Bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Stir to dissolve the bouillon. Reduce heat to low and simmer.
3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, mix the ground meat, tomato, onion, egg and salt. Form into 12 meatballs.
4. Add meatballs to the broth mixture and simmer for 30 minutes.
5. Add the vegetables. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes or until the meatballs are cooked and rice and vegetables are tender.
6. Serve hot.