

Question : JH Writes: Hello, I'm a 5'8, 138 lb., very active female who enjoys wine. I've always felt that the 1 glass/day max should not apply to me, when a male, who might be unfit and smaller than me, gets the ok to imbibe 2 glasses. What do you say to this? Thank you.

Answer : Your question is intriguing on many levels. We presume that your question refers to level of ethanol clearance and metabolism, and not what the preferred level of consumption is to achieve maximal health benefit. Of course there is no way of measuring your level/concentration and type of alcohol dehydrogenase receptor status or your liver volume at the time of this question. Federal nutritional guidelines are based on a woman who is 5 ft.4in. 125 lbs. consuming five ounces of 12% ethanol wine/day. As your question implies, several factors effect alcohol metabolism including: - EtOH concentration - Carbonation (I.e., champagne, soda) - Food - Gender - Liver size - Body weight - Variations in enzymes which break down EtOH There are also gender and ethnically based differences based on different subcategories of alcohol dehydrogenase and liver metabolism. As a result, there will be individual variation on alcohol metabolism (and therefore how much you can drink without feeling the effects of intoxication). Studies suggest that acute exercise enhances ethanol clearance in humans but are limited and unclear about the impact of chronic exercise on ethanol metabolism. The majority of studies focus on the effect of acute alcohol consumption and or intoxication and their effects on exercise and exercise efficiency.