

January 2025

# BEYOND THE BENEFITS



## 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 Civic Science tracking poll.*

## 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.



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## 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.

- **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.



## January is National Blood Donor Month

Winter poses challenges for blood collection, making National Blood Donor Month in January essential. In the U.S., someone needs blood or platelets every two seconds, and daily demand includes 29,000 units of red blood cells, 5,000 platelets, and 6,500 plasma. Donations are crucial as blood and platelets can't be synthetically made.

Benefits of regular blood donation include:

- **Health screening:** Blood is tested, and a quick health check is conducted.
- **Heart health:** Reduces iron buildup, lowering blood pressure and heart attack risk.
- **Calorie burn:** Donating can burn up to 650 calories.

Before donating, ensure you meet the American Red Cross requirements for safe blood donation.

# Beef and Cabbage

Makes: 4 Servings

## Ingredients:

- 1 green cabbage head
- 1 medium onion
- 1 lb. 90% lean ground beef
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- Salt to taste
- Red pepper flakes

## Preparations:

1. Chop the cabbage and onion; set them aside.
2. In a large skillet, cook the ground beef on medium heat until browned. Drain the fat. Set the beef aside.
3. Spray the skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Cook the chopped onion on medium heat until soft.
4. Add the cabbage to the chopped onion and cook until the cabbage starts to brown.
5. Stir the beef into the cabbage and onion mixture.
6. Season with garlic powder, black pepper and salt (optional). Add red pepper flakes (optional) to the cabbage if you like it spicy.

## Nutritional Information (per serving)

- Total calories: 248
- Total fat: 10 g
- Protein: 25 g
- Sodium: 107 mg
- Carbohydrate: 16 g
- Dietary fiber: 6 g
- Saturated fat: 4 g
- Total sugars: 8 g

Source: MyPlate



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