

## NUTRITION AND DRINKING

Good nutrition is incredibly important for drinkers. People who are long-term, heavy alcohol users are at risk for several different vitamin deficiencies and related illnesses. This is because alcohol interferes with how your body absorbs and processes some important nutrients. Many people also don't feel hungry when they drink, and will go long periods of time without eating good food. All of these things can negatively impact your health.

Despite the important role of diet in protecting drinkers health, there are few resources designed for people who are actively drinking. This resource features a "Healthy Plate" for drinkers that is designed to help you, or the community you serve, to reduce the harms of illicit drinking with good nutrition.

## WHAT IS EIDGE?

The Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education (EIDGE) is a group of people who use non-beverage alcohol (mouthwash, rubbing alcohol, etc) and people who drink in ways that are criminalized. We meet, organize, and conduct research to promote safety amongst our members.

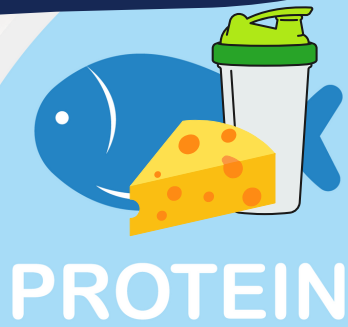
SEE MORE OF EIDGE'S WORK AT: [WWW.VANDU.ORG/EIDGE/](http://WWW.VANDU.ORG/EIDGE/)

## HOW DID WE MAKE THIS POSTER?

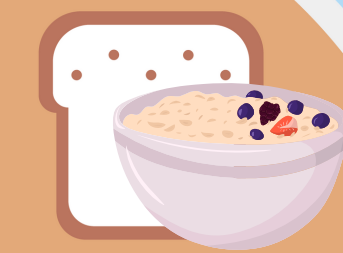
The idea for this poster came from EIDGE members, who were frustrated by the lack of accessible information on nutrition for drinkers. We did our own research and consulted medical professionals and dieticians to make sure it was correct. All of the recommended foods on this poster are accessible in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

## A "HEALTHY PLATE" FOR DRINKERS

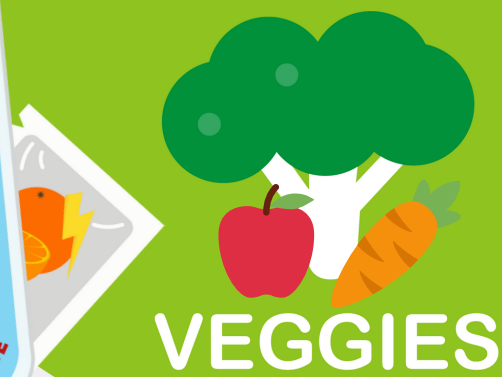
- Healthy diet for active drinkers includes mostly vegetables, with proteins and grains to get specific nutrients.



PROTEIN



GRAINS



VEGGIES

- Thiamine (Vitamin B1)
  - Vitamin A
  - Zinc
  - Selenium
- Proteins
- Riboflavin
- Vitamin B12

- Carbohydrates
- Thiamine (Vitamin B1)
- Vitamin B3
- Vitamin B6
- Magnesium

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin A
- Magnesium
- Vitamin B6
- Niacin
- Potassium
- Folate

## THIAMINE!

- If you drink every day, talk to your doctor or pharmacy about Thiamine (Vitamin B1) supplements. Thiamine protects your brain and nervous system, and most drinkers don't get enough from their diet.
- People who use alcohol and eat consistently should consider taking 100mg of Thiamine each day. People who eat less should consider taking 200mg each day.

## EASY MEALS WHEN YOU'RE DRINKING\*

### BREAKFAST

- Low-sugar cereals
- Eggs
- Oatmeal
- Yogurt
- Fruits and berries
- Granola

### LUNCH

- Tuna salad sandwiches
- Egg salad sandwiches
- Peanut butter & jam
- Miso soup

### DINNER

- Pasta casseroles
- Chicken
- Rice
- Instant noodles
- Vegetable soups
- Tuna salad
- Ensure / meal replacement

### SNACKS

- Granola bars
- Veggies and dip
- Bananas
- Baby carrots
- Dried seaweed
- Citrus fruits
- Low-sugar freezies

### DRINKS

- Water
- Herbal tea
- Fruit juice
- Pedialyte
- Gatorade

It's common for people who have been drinking most days for a long time to have low blood sugar and low energy. That said, candy and caffeine are still best in moderation.

### DIY HYDRATION

You can also make your own rehydration drink to fight off hangovers with the following recipe:

- 1 litre of water
- 1 handful of sugar
- 1 pinch of salt
- Some lemon juice

## LIVER CARE BASICS

Your liver is a vital organ with more than 40 different functions. It helps to process nutrients and many drugs in the body. Long-term, heavy drinking damages the liver, but there are things you can do to protect it:

- Take liver holidays; The more safe breaks you take from drinking heavily, the more your liver can bounce back
- Talk to your health care provider about regular liver function tests. This involves an exam, bloodwork, and sometimes an ultrasound.
- See your doctor regularly, especially important if you live with HIV, Hepatitis C, or diabetes.
- Avoid some drugs that are hard on the liver, including:
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - Ibuprofen (Advil)
  - Iron supplements
  - Licorice root
  - St. Johns Wort

\*EIDGE and members of the PHS Drinkers Lounge Community Managed Alcohol Program discussed drinker's nutritional needs and what is cheap and accessible in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a food desert, to prepare these recommendations. These foods can also be prepared in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing, shelters, and drop-in centres.

### Sources:

1) [www.vch.ca/en/vch-healthy-plate](http://www.vch.ca/en/vch-healthy-plate)  
 2) [www.harmreductionwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/181219-ACT-WFD-A-nutrition-guide-for-consumers.pdf](http://www.harmreductionwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/181219-ACT-WFD-A-nutrition-guide-for-consumers.pdf)  
 3) Kamran, U., Towey, J., Khanna, A., Chauhan, A., Rajoriya, N., & Holt, A. (2020). Nutrition in alcohol-related liver disease: Physiopathology and management. World journal of gastroenterology, 26(22), 2916  
 4) Martin, P. R., Singleton, C. K., & Hiller-Sturmhöfel, S. (2003). The role of thiamine deficiency in alcoholic brain disease. Alcohol research & health, 27(2), 134.  
 5) BCCDC Hepatitis C: The Basics. Online course. [www.learninghub.phsa.ca/Courses/5935/bccdc-hepatitis-c-the-basics](http://www.learninghub.phsa.ca/Courses/5935/bccdc-hepatitis-c-the-basics)