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Awareness of intestinal care to ease your hangover!

by Ayumi Yoshida (Registered dietitian)

Have you ever experienced a hangover? The uncomfortable feeling that occurs when the concentration of blood alcohol is still high about 2 to 6 hours after drinking is described as "sick from drinking" and "hangover" appears by the time the concentration of blood alcohol will have decreased in the next morning.

The most notable symptoms of hangover are strong headache, upset stomach, nausea, etc. Many factors contribute to cause a hangover but its mechanism has not yet been revealed. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in Japan has also announced that the mechanism of hangover is hardly elucidated.

However, "dehydration" is a leading cause of hangover. Alcohol has a diuretic effect. Therefore, 600 to 1000 ml of moisture is lost by drinking 50g of alcohol (about 1.2 liter of beer). Because of this, when we drink alcohol, we experience headache, sluggishness and nausea that are similar symptoms happening when we are dehydrated in the summer. In addition, the diuretic action increases as the alcohol content increases. When we drink wine or distilled spirits with a high content of alcohol, more moisture than what we have ingested through drinking may be lost as urine and the symptoms of the hangover can worsen.

Another possible cause of a hangover is "acetaldehyde". This is a toxic substance generated during the course of alcohol decomposition. Many Japanese people are less capable of the secretion and activation of the enzyme that degrades acetaldehyde called Acetaldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH). Therefore, acetaldehyde remains in the body even when the decomposition of alcohol is over which will be able to cause a hangover.

◆◆ Why can turmeric prevent hangover?

There are various foods effective to prevent hangovers. Currently, there are many products in the market that claim they can avoid sickness from drinking and hangover by taking them before drinking. Among those products, we often see the item using "turmeric" in them.

Turmeric is a perennial plant in the ginger family used for curry powder and food coloring, as well as dyes for clothing or fabrics and crude drugs. It is said that "curcumin" which is one of the polyphenols contained in turmeric has actions of enhancing the detoxification in the liver and promoting the secretion of bile. Because bile can promote decomposition of acetaldehyde which causes a hangover, it is expected to prevent sick from drinking and hangover by taking turmeric. Taking a food like turmeric, which can support the function of the liver, before and after drinking alcohol can be a good help to prevent or eliminate hangovers.

However, the part of the body that needs to be cared for after drinking alcohol is not only the liver, which decomposes alcohol, but also the intestines. It is also important to not forget to take care of the intestines because they absorb about 80% of the alcohol you take.

◆◆ Why alcohol makes stool soft?

Have you ever noticed that your stool becomes soft after drinking or on the next day? This is related to the fact that the intestines absorb about 80% of alcohol during drinking. Once alcohol enters the intestinal tract, it irritates the intestinal mucosa and causes damages there. Therefore, the absorption of moisture and electrolytes in the intestinal tract is inhibited. As a result, the moisture that was not properly absorbed in the intestines unites with the compounds of stool which will make the stool soft.

In addition, alcohol activates the peristaltic movement in the intestines which make stool move faster than normal. The fact that moisture contained in the stool is excreted without being properly absorbed in the intestines is also a factor of making the stool soft.

◆◆ Consciously pay attention to intestines in order to prevent troubles after drinking

If you drink a lot of alcohol at a time or frequently drink more than the appropriate amount, it will disturb bowel movements and deteriorate the intestinal environment. We recommend to take care of the overused intestines by eating easily digestible foods or taking fermented foods that can restore the intestinal balance at the next day of drinking. Also, drinking cold liquor

such as beer or alcoholic beverage will cool your bowel and make bowel movement slow, so we recommend to warm up alcohol or alcoholic beverage. When we drink alcohol, we should not only keep in mind to drink slowly and have only an adequate amount of alcohol, but also consider the functions of intestines and the liver.

Just for reference, the following amount of alcohol is considered as an appropriate amount for Japanese people.

Types of alcoholic drink	Alcohol content	Rough standard
Alcoholic beverage	5%	About 520 ml
Beer	5%	500 ml
Sake	15%	180 ml
Shochu / Distilled spirit	25%	About 110 ml
Wine	14%	About 180 ml
Whiskey	43%	60 ml

There are times when we drink too much alcohol. Unfortunately, there is no quick remedy for a terrible hangover. We should exercise restraint about the way of drinking alcohol in order to avoid feeling uncomfortable on the following day.