



## My year without alcohol, Roxy Isa, LGIS Executive Support

***In 2016 I thought I would try and actually complete a New Year's resolution (usually I would have given up by February) and go a year without drinking alcohol.***

I would not call myself an alcoholic and I do not drink every day, but I am a binge drinker; I would drink large amounts on weekends. Two things I wanted to accomplish during the year were:

1. To lose a ton of weight (and look like Miranda Kerr) and;
2. I wanted to change my binge drinking habits and learn to drink in moderation.

Unfortunately, I did not achieve my first goal. Whilst everyone else enjoyed drinking on a night out, I enjoyed the nibbles, cheese and crackers instead. I did accomplish my second goal though. I believe I now have a better relationship with alcohol and although there were plenty of ups and downs I am very proud of myself for actually fulfilling a New Year's resolution.

**Some of the challenges I faced during my year without alcohol included:**

- ▶ Constantly being told "you are so boring" or "why are you not drinking? How boring" I was surprised by how often I heard this and how hurtful it actually became. Even now that I have started drinking I could be holding the same glass of wine in my hand for two hours and as long as people think I am drinking it is "acceptable".
- ▶ I constantly had friends waving drinks in my face. Even seven months into my challenge people would still try to get me to drink. I was genuinely surprised at how unsupportive some people were.
- ▶ I was frequently asked if I was pregnant. This was probably the most annoying question I got all year.
- ▶ I do not drink soft drink or juice so I found the choices for "non-drinkers" at birthdays, social functions or other events to be very limited. It was either water or soda water; did I mention water?



**Things I learned and loved during my year without alcohol included:**

- ▶ Waking up without a hangover was the greatest feeling and probably the best thing about not drinking.
- ▶ Not having to wait for taxis or Ubers. My husband was probably the most pleased about this as he had a designated driver all year.
- ▶ Going to bed feeling fresh in my pyjamas and not waking up in last night's outfit, make-up still on, and with half a cheeseburger in my hand.
- ▶ Knowing that every decision I made – I was 100% in control. There is nothing worse than reflecting on the night before when you first wake up and thinking "what did I do or say last night".
- ▶ The overwhelmingly amazing feeling I had knowing that I had accomplished my New Year's resolution.

Overall giving up alcohol helped me learn a lot about myself, it helped me to understand that I do not have to excessively drink to have a good time and it has even shown me the "true colours" of close friends.

Although in 2017, I am back to enjoying a few Margarita's, I have a better relationship with alcohol. I highly recommend others give it a go. It does not have to be for a year, why not try signing up to Dry July. One month is enough to see and feel the endless benefits.

# Are you getting enough iron?

Iron is an important mineral that is involved in various body functions, including the transport of oxygen in the blood and is essential for providing energy for daily living. The average person needs to absorb just a small amount of iron each day to stay healthy (around 1 mg for adult males and 1.5 mg for menstruating females). To achieve this, however, we need to consume several times that amount. This is because our bodies absorb only a fraction of the iron contained in the foods we eat.

There are two forms of iron found in food, haem iron and non-haem iron. Haem iron is the more readily absorbed form of iron and is found in meat, poultry and fish. The non-haem form of iron is less easily absorbed and is found in eggs and many plant foods.

## People who are most at risk of iron deficiency include:

- ▶ Women in their reproductive years
- ▶ Young children
- ▶ Pregnant women
- ▶ Vegetarians
- ▶ Vegans

## Signs and symptoms of iron deficiency include:

- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Lack of concentration
- ▶ Increased risk of infection
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Pale skin
- ▶ Weakness/dizziness

## How can you improve your iron intake?

- ▶ Eat foods high in vitamin C (fruits and vegetables) with foods that contain iron to increase the absorption.
- ▶ Cook your plant foods to improve the amount of available iron.
- ▶ Avoid having tea, coffee or calcium during or directly after having a source of iron. Tannins from tea and coffee reduce iron absorption by binding to the iron and carrying it out of the body.

If you develop any signs or symptoms that suggest iron deficiency, see your doctor. Ensure that you only take iron supplements under the advice of a GP, as too much iron can also be harmful.



## Healthy San Choy Bow

San choy bow is an easy recipe the whole family will love. You can use beef, turkey, pork or chicken mince and any vegetables you like. You can make big batches of the mince mix and store some in the freezer for those nights when you just cannot be bothered.

### Ingredients:

- ▶ 500g lean mince of your choice
- ▶ 1 brown onion, diced
- ▶ 2 gloves garlic, crushed
- ▶ 1cm knob ginger, finely grated
- ▶ ½ zucchini, grated
- ▶ 1 red chili, finely chopped
- ▶ 1 carrot, grated
- ▶ 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- ▶ 1 red capsicum, diced into small cubes
- ▶ ¼ cup bean sprouts
- ▶ Iceberg lettuce cups, carefully broken off lettuce head, washed and drained
- ▶ 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- ▶ ½ cup tamari
- ▶ 2 Tbsp salt reduced soy sauce
- ▶ 2 Tbsp sesame seeds to garnish (optional)

### Method:

Heat sesame oil in a large frying pan, add onion, garlic, ginger and chili and fry for 2-3 minutes.

Add mince and cook until well browned.

Add vegetables, tamari and soy sauce and cook for a further five minutes, until vegetables are slightly soft. You can add a little water if the mixture is too dry.

To plate up, take drained lettuce cups and place them face up on a large plate. Spoon mixture in being careful not to overload as the lettuce will break. Sprinkle with sesame seeds (optional).



Lvl 3 170 Railway Parade,  
West Leederville WA 6007

 (08) 9483 8888  [lgiswa.com.au](http://lgiswa.com.au)

*The information provided in this newsletter is general guidance only and should not be relied on as a substitute for professional advice. No liability will be accepted for losses resulting to any reader relying solely on this publication. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced without permission from LGIS.*

Renee Rohde is a specialist health and wellbeing professional and Program Manager at LGIS.

**Contact Renee on 9483 8888 for more information regarding these programs.**