

## Lithiated Lemon-Lime Sodas

**A**lcoholic hangover, or *veisalgia* (from the Norwegian *kveis*, meaning “uneasiness following debauchery,” and the Greek *algia*, meaning “pain”) (1), is a common and substantial problem. Common symptoms of hangovers include headaches, malaise, diarrhea, anorexia, fatigue, tremulousness, and nausea (2). The majority of hangovers (87%) are experienced by light or moderate alcohol drinkers (1). Morbidity resulting from hangovers (mainly through missed work) has been estimated to cost \$3.3 billion in Britain, \$7.5 billion in Canada, and \$148 billion in the United States (1). On a personal level, affected individuals frequently attempt to alleviate the symptoms of hangovers by a wide variety of means.

Despite the apparent cost of hangovers, organized medicine has generally avoided treatment for hangovers because of a belief that it may enable patients with alcohol abuse to continue to abuse alcohol (3). However, although there is no evidence that alleviation of hangover discomfort increases future alcohol consumption (3), there is evidence that not doing so is associated with an increased likelihood to drink (4). In an Internet search regarding treatments for hangovers that provided over 325,000 hits, a recurrent theme was alcohol (5).

The search for alcoholic hangover treatments is not a new phenomenon. In the early 20th century, several products were introduced to fill this niche. In 1929, a new drink was introduced by the Howdy Company called Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Soda. Subsequently, the name was changed to 7-Up Lithiated Lemon-Lime and, ultimately, to 7-Up. Although it was clearly a soft drink, the creator of 7-Up, Charles Leiper Grigg, believed that it cured alcoholic hangovers, and it was marketed as such with an early marketing slogan of “It takes the ouch out of grouch” (6). Lithiated products were common in the early part of the 20th century and were believed by many people to be healthful (7). The success of 7-Up spawned several similar products. The 1930s and 1940s saw the introduction of such products as “Wake-Up,” “Heads Up,” and “B1.” All of these products were lithiated and believed to be helpful for alcoholic hangovers. The lithiated lemon-lime soda B1 even had thiamine added.



### References

1. Wiese JG, Shlipak MG, Browner WS: The alcohol hangover. *Ann Intern Med* 2000; 132:897–902
2. Harburg E, Davis E, Cummings KM, Gunn R: Negative affect, alcohol consumption and hangover symptoms among normal drinkers in a small community. *J Stud Alcohol* 1981; 42:998–1012
3. Earleywine M: Personality risk for alcoholism covaries with hangover symptoms. *Addict Behav* 1993; 18:415–420
4. Earleywine M: Hangover moderates the association between personality and drinking problems. *Addict Behav* 1993; 18: 291–297
5. Pittler MH, Verster JC, Ernst E: Interventions for preventing or treating alcohol hangover: systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Br Med J* 2005; 331:1515–1518
6. Wikipedia: WikiProject Soft Drinks. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Soft\\_Drinks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Soft_Drinks)
7. El-Mallakh RS, Jefferson JW: Prethymoleptic use of lithium. *Am J Psychiatry* 1999; 156:129

RIF S. EL-MALLAKH, M.D.  
RONA JEANNIE ROBERTS, M.D.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. El-Mallakh, Mood Disorders Research Program, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Louisville School of Medicine, MedCenter One, 501 E. Broadway, Louisville, KY 40202; rselma01@louisville.edu (e-mail). Photograph by Anne Bickel and Charlene Stevens. Image accepted for publication August 2007 (doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2007.07081255).

Dr. El-Mallakh is funded currently by research grants from Forest and Shire. Dr. Roberts reports no competing interests.