

Alcohol Consumption, Heart Disease and Cancer

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Alcohol consumption as it relates to the impact on heart disease and cancer has been a hot topic for many years.

Many people want to believe that the consumption of red wine is protective, and for some, even therapeutic for cardiovascular disease.

Unfortunately, strong peer reviewed studies show the contrary.

In fact, the evidence is so overwhelming that even a small amount of alcohol is **outright dangerous!**

Many misinformed people have thought the consumption of alcohol (red wine for some) increased HDL-C, had vasodilatory properties and anti-platelet activity (it thins your blood).

For some die-hard recreational alcohol consumers, the mention of red wine brings dreams of beneficial antioxidants like resveratrol and vitamin E.

Well, it turns out none of those things are true.

Many of the studies cited by proponents of limited alcohol consumption were subject to selection bias.

Unfortunately for lovers of recreational alcohol the current and most rigorous research show the total opposite to be true.

More and more powerful studies now show that even small amounts of alcohol can **increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, like coronary artery disease, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, hypertension, fatty liver, and aneurysms.**

A meta-analysis published in 2018 in The Lancet (*The Lancet publishes the best science from the best scientists worldwide, providing an unparalleled global reach and impact on health*) looked at 599,912 drinkers with over 5.4-million-person years of follow up. They found that all-cause mortality increased at **100g per week of alcohol.**

Alcohol intake was also associated with a higher risk of stroke, coronary disease, heart failure, fatal hypertensive disease, and fatal aortic aneurysm. Those who reported consuming more than **100g/week and up to 350g/week had a shorter life expectancy by age 40, by 6 months and up to 5 years for those who consumed the most.**

Now for those who claim they consume minimal amounts of alcohol **the news is not good.**

A study published in March of 2023 found that people who drank **25 to 44 g per day** of alcohol had a small risk of all-cause mortality.

The risk became more significant for those who drank **45 to 64 g or more per day.** There was larger risk for mortality among female drinkers compared to female lifelong nondrinkers.

The World Heart Federation examined all the data and studies on CVD and alcohol consumption and determined that **NO amount was safe in terms of cardiovascular disease, cancer risk, and other causes of mortality.**

Good summary in the below reference on alcohol by World Heart Federation alone is **pure gold.**

The World Heart Federation unites the diverse cardiovascular community to bring cardiovascular health to the forefront of the global health agenda - a global community of heart foundations, scientific societies and patient organizations, united in our mission to achieve heart health for everyone.

If you want to optimize your heart and brain health, avoid alcohol or keep it to the bare minimum.

Alcohol Consumption and Cancer

There is strong scientific evidence that alcohol drinking can cause several types of cancer.

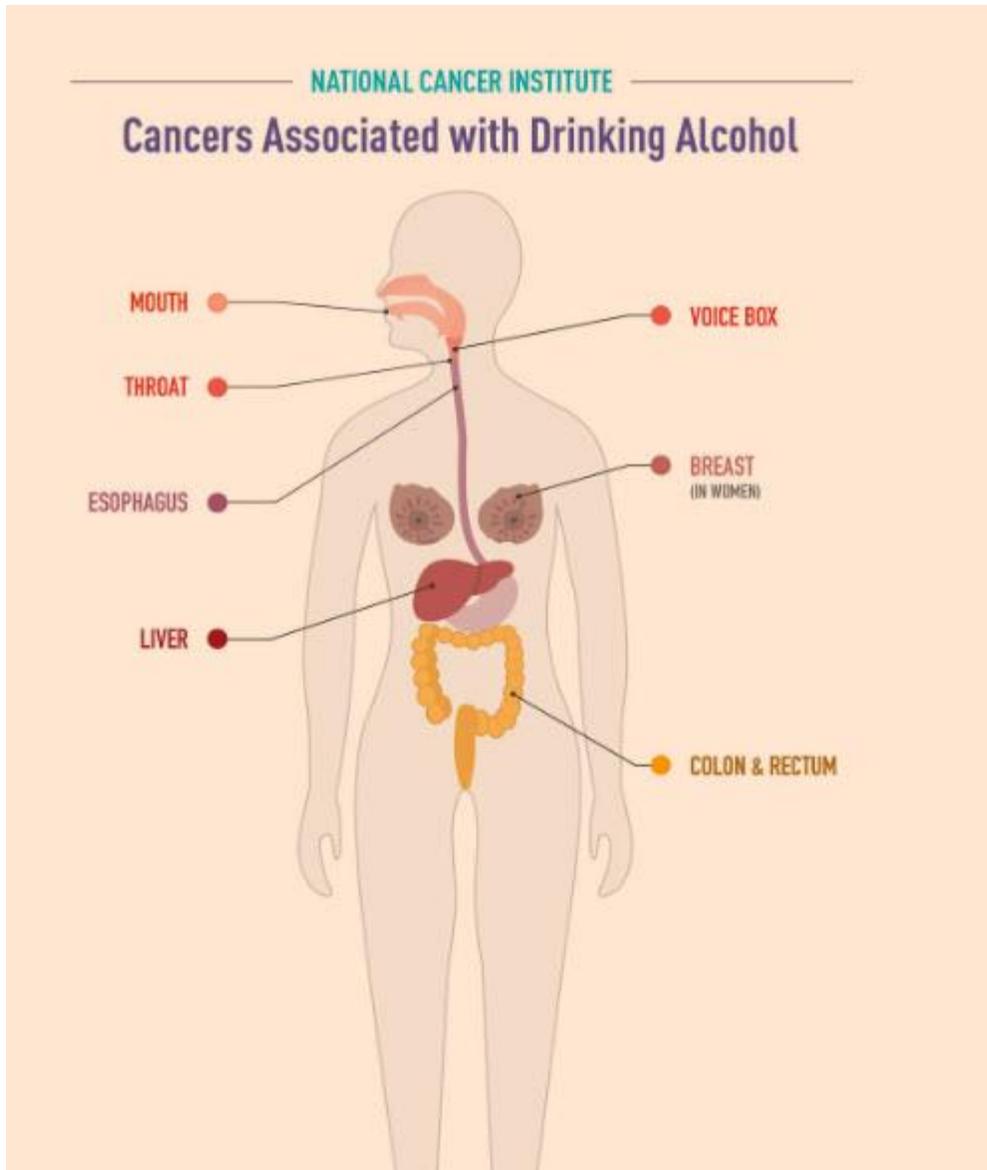
The US Department of Health and Human Services lists consumption of alcoholic beverages as a **known human carcinogen.**

The evidence shows that the more alcohol a person drinks the higher his or her risk of developing an alcohol-associated cancer. Even those who have no more than one drink per day have a modestly increased risk of some cancers. Based on

data from 2009, an estimated 3.5% of cancer deaths in the United States (about 19,500 deaths) were alcohol related.

The following are the most researched between alcohol consumption and the development of the following types of cancer:

- Head and neck cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Liver cancer: Heavy alcohol consumption is associated with approximately 2-fold increased risks of two types of liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma and intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma)
- Breast cancer: Pooled data from 118 individual studies indicates that light drinkers have a slightly increased risk of breast cancer, compared with nondrinkers.
- Colorectal cancer: Moderate to heavy alcohol consumption is associated with 1.2- to 1.5-fold increased risks of cancers of the colon and rectum compared with no alcohol consumption.



In addition to the above alcohol related cancers evidence is accumulating that alcohol consumption is associated with increased risks of melanoma and of prostate and pancreatic cancers.

A strong peer reviewed study that included data from more than 1,000 alcohol studies and data sources, as well as death and disability records from 195 countries and territories from 1990 to 2016, concluded that **the optimal number of drinks to consume per day to minimize the overall risk to health is ZERO.**

Dr. Badanek's Comments:

For those who want to debate this article and stand firm of continuing to consume recreational alcohol.... clear and convincing evidence is strong that any potential benefits of alcohol consumption for reducing the risks of some cancers are likely outweighed by the harms of alcohol consumption.

References:

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** Always consult with a physician or healthcare practitioner with significant integrative or functional medicine training before starting any of the above recommendations.

The information on this website is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the research and experience of Dr. Badanek and his functional medicine community.

Dr. Badanek has been and currently is 42 years into active/private practice in the Ocala/Marion County, Florida region. Dr. Badanek practices Natural/Holistic

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