



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox Talks

Is Drinking Alcohol Part of a Healthy Lifestyle?

If you enjoy sipping a glass of wine, a beer or a cocktail now and then, keep moderation in mind to protect your health. Moderate alcohol consumption means an average of one to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. Different types of beer, wine and liquor have different amounts of alcohol. But in general, a drink is one 12-ounce regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits, such as bourbon, vodka or gin .

How does drinking alcohol affect health?

Drinking too much alcohol increases your risk for many health problems, including high blood pressure, obesity, stroke, breast cancer, liver disease, depression, suicide, accidents, alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Here's what science tells us about alcohol's effects on the body.

- Drinking too much alcohol can raise the levels of some fats in the blood known as triglycerides. A high triglyceride level has been associated with fatty buildup in the artery walls, in turn, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- Heavy drinking may also prematurely age arteries over time, particularly in men, when compared to moderate drinkers.
- All the extra calories from drinking alcohol can lead to obesity and a higher risk of developing diabetes.

Did you know?

Many think red wine is supposed to be healthy and that a glass a day can be good for the heart. BUT, no research has proved a cause-and-effect link between drinking alcohol and better heart health. Components in red wine such as flavonoids and other antioxidants can potentially reduce heart disease risk, but they can also be found in other foods like grapes or blueberries.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is alcohol high in calories?

A beer or glass of wine is generally around 100-150 calories. A cocktail can range from 100-500 calories depending on the ingredients.

Is it okay to drink alcohol if I take aspirin?

People who take aspirin regularly are at risk for stomach problems, and alcohol can increase these risks. Consult with your doctor to see if it is safe for you.

Discussion Questions:

- What changes do you feel in your body after consuming alcohol?