

## Drinking Wine Improves Cardiovascular Health

For years, American researchers were puzzled by the health and well-being of the French, whose daily consumption of wine seemed to bolster their overall health. In the last few decades of the 20th century, a series of studies were conducted to determine how the consumption of wine could be so beneficial. Researchers discovered that there was a link between drinking wine during mealtimes and the reduction of coronary heart disease.

Wine's positive effect on the cardiovascular system can be attributed to its effect on the growth of arterial muscle cells. Researchers discovered that the timing of the wine consumption, specifically during meal times, was a key component to preventing the development of the smooth muscle cells. Blood tends to clot when exposed to fat, but wine appears to help to prevent clotting within the arteries. The eradication of clotting ultimately helps to stop the growth of the smooth muscle cells, thereby preventing the development of arteriosclerosis, a disease which can build up fatty deposits in the arteries. Arteriosclerosis contributes heavily to the occurrence of heart attacks and heart disease, helping to explain why the French fared so much better compared to their American peers.

But wine isn't simply of aid to the cardiovascular system. Further study has revealed that a moderate regular consumption of wine has other health benefits, including fewer kidney stones. The same qualities in wine that help in the prevention of clotting also help to reduce the formation of the painful stones. In a study conducted with seventeen popular beverages, including tea and fruit juices, wine had the best rates of kidney stone prevention among both men and women.

Some researchers have noted that the tannins present in red wine seem to be responsible for the beverage's particularly beneficial preventative qualities. Tannins are specific polyphenols gathered from plants, which bind proteins, amino acids, and alkaloids together. Although tannins contribute a somewhat astringent taste to red wine, they also help to strengthen the consistency and taste by binding so many different elements together.

As the researchers were careful to note, when consumed in moderation, wine can have a positive impact on your overall well-being. However, excessive consumption of any alcohol will ultimately cause more health problems than it solves. Wine is best enjoyed as part of a meal, or among the company of good friends. Here's to your health!

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