

Wine as Part of a Healthy Lifestyle

“Wine is the most healthful and hygienic of all beverages.”

Louis Pasteur, 1880



Moderate Wine Consumption and Modern Scientific Research

The ground-breaking study published in the *LANCET* by St. Leger et al. in 1979, was one of the first to point to the link between a reduction in deaths from heart disease and moderate wine consumption. It established that the lowest rates of death from ischemic heart disease occur in countries where moderate wine consumption is prevalent (between 1 to 3 glasses of wine per day).

Further research by French epidemiologist and nutritionist Serge Renaud, has shown that despite the high level of risk from elevated levels of cholesterol, fat and hypertension, the French have one of the lowest death rates from heart disease in the world.

According to Renaud, the daily moderate consumption of wine is an important factor in explaining this contradictory pattern known as the “**French Paradox**”.

Moreover, results from recent studies by Renaud (1999, 2002) indicate that the protective effect of a moderate intake of wine on all-cause mortality is observed at all levels of blood pressure and serum cholesterol.

The benefits of moderate drinking have been recognized for centuries, with wine being viewed as complementary and compatible with a healthy lifestyle. Though not a drug, physicians historically have recommended wine as a treatment for iron deficiency anemia, to increase the absorption of minerals and reduce the occurrence of sleep disorders. Traditionally, wine has been enjoyed with meals and has been known to aid the digestive process, stimulate the intake of nutrients, and more recently, assist in lowering cholesterol and contributing to the maintenance of a healthy heart.

Over the past 30 years, hundreds of scientific studies throughout the world, involving more than 1 million people, have suggested that moderate wine consumption can extend life expectancy by several years beyond that of non-drinkers, assist in protecting against various types of heart disease and cancers, and delay or reduce the risk of developing a range of other diseases.

In particular, research over the last century has demonstrated how key organic compounds found in wine, namely **flavonoid and non-flavonoid polyphenols**, provide additional healthful benefits not attributed to other alcoholic beverages.

“A meal without wine is like a day without sunshine.”

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Wine and the Benefits to Health

Wine is a particularly rich and diverse source of all the major classes of phenolics, which are preserved during the normal anaerobic (devoid of air) production process for wine. Moreover, the ethanol produced during the fermentation process serves to boost the substantial amounts of flavonoid phenolics already present in the skins and seeds of red wine grapes.

Wine consumed in moderation has long been considered as part of a healthy lifestyle and diet. While wine should not be viewed as a substitute for other components of a healthy lifestyle, such as a balanced and nutritious diet, regular physical activity and a reduction in stress levels, it can be viewed as an enjoyable element of an overall healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Research continues to explore how and why it is that those who consume wine in moderation daily are at lower risk for developing certain types of common ailments and diseases. While wine enjoyed in moderation with meals is one factor, other reasons include the addition of moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes daily, 3 to 4 times a week, reduced stress levels and a healthy diet such as the Traditional Mediterranean Diet.

The Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

The nine-tiered Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid is based on the traditional diet of Crete and Southern Italy, though variations of this diet have traditionally existed in other areas of olive oil cultivation in the Mediterranean region. It is a diet rich in food from plant-based sources, including fruits and vegetables, potatoes, breads, grains, beans, nuts and seeds, which includes exercise several times a week and the daily consumption of wine in moderation.



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Shown above, wine in moderation – of between one to two glasses a day – is part of a recommended healthy diet. (1 glass = 5 oz serving of wine containing 12% alc./vol.)



Naturally Occurring Compounds Found Only in Wine Benefit Health

In addition to the positive aspects associated with the alcohol in wine, there are compounds known as **polyphenols** found in no other alcoholic beverages but wine, which are responsible for the healthful and protective properties of wine.

Polyphenols such as **quercetin** and **catechin**, are known for their antimicrobial, antiviral and anticarcinogenic properties.

Resveratrol, the compound found primarily in the skins of grapes used in red wine production, is responsible for some of the health-giving attributes of red wine, such as the maintenance of a healthy heart and circulatory system and the potential contribution to minimizing the prevalence of certain types of cancers.

Moreover, according to studies published in the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ENOLOGY AND VITICULTURE* on levels of resveratrol in over 1000 wines, *Canadian wines had 2 to 3 times the concentration of resveratrol than wine from most other prominent wine-producing countries and regions.*

"...trans-resveratrol may be the most effective anticancer polyphenol present in red wine as consumed by healthy human subjects."

Dr. George Soleas et al. in Clinical Biochemistry, 35 (2002)

In addition to the alcohol, ongoing research continues to focus on how **the polyphenolic compounds** found in wine, known for their anti-oxidant properties or the ability to destroy free radicals in the body, have been linked with the following:

- contribution in the reduction of rates of blood clotting/coagulation
- reduced risk of a second heart attack
- increase in the amount of "good" cholesterol (HDL)
- decrease in the amount of "bad" cholesterol (LDL)
- prevention of the production of compounds responsible for the inflammation associated with arthritis and rheumatism
- decreased incidence of certain kinds of cancers

Your health can benefit from the moderate consumption of wine as part of an overall healthy lifestyle, just as it could suffer from its abuse.

Please consult your physician for personal questions and advice on the effects of alcohol and your health.

Pregnant women are advised not to drink alcohol.

Please enjoy our product in moderation and drink responsibly.

To Your Health!

This publication is for educational purposes only.

The reader may wish to consult the extensive list of scientific references, journal articles, publications and website links on the benefits of the moderate and responsible consumption of wine on the Canadian Vintners Association website at: www.canadianvintners.com

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The Canadian Vintners Association acknowledges the potential problem of alcohol abuse and strongly advises against the excessive and irresponsible consumption of alcohol.

PLEASE DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE.



"For the vast majority moderate consumption of alcohol, particularly wine, is beneficial. It is associated with improved health and longevity.... Abuse of alcohol in any form is very damaging to health, and shortens life."

*Dr. Harvey E. Finkel
Clinical Professor of Medicine,
Boston University Medical Center*



Wine and a Healthy Lifestyle

