

Title: Alcohol and Heart Attacks: What's the story?

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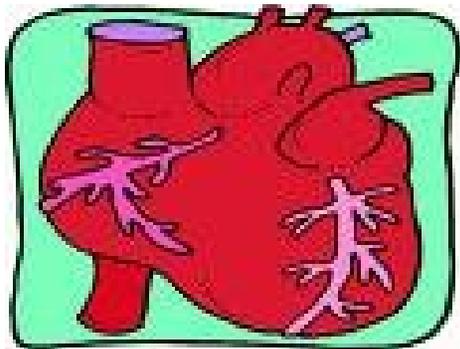
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- Abstract: Multiple large studies have found that drinking roughly one or more drinks per night reduces the risk of myocardial infarction. That being said, alcohol use is associated with notable adverse effects, including but not limited to, psychosocial disability, addiction, excess dietary calories, motor vehicle accidents, loss of productive work hours, and increased tendency towards violence and risky sexual practices. Although safe and moderate alcohol consumption may minimize these risks, a physician recommendation to drink alcohol for a "healthy heart" is likely not warranted at this time.

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So, should I be drinking moderate amounts of alcohol to prevent a heart attack?

- Alcohol use is certainly not without notable adverse effects. These include, but are not limited to, psychosocial disability, addiction, excess dietary calories, motor vehicle accidents, loss of productive work hours, and increased tendency towards violence and risky sexual practices. Although safe and moderate alcohol consumption may minimize these risks, a physician recommendation to drink alcohol for a “healthy heart” is likely not warranted at this time.



Alcohol and Myocardial Infarction: Is alcohol good for my heart?



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The Data

- Many studies have looked at the association of alcohol and the incidence of heart attack and the majority of these studies show a reduced risk of heart attack among those who drink moderate amounts of alcohol.
 - Generally, a “moderate” amount of alcohol is considered to be equal to or less than 2 drinks per day for men and 1 drink per day for women.

OK, so drinking alcohol is good for my heart?

- Maybe. There appears to be a very strong correlation between alcohol intake and a decreased risk of heart attacks. However, these studies merely show an *association* and do not address *causation*. What this means is that it is unknown whether those people who drink alcohol have less heart attacks because they drink alcohol or because of something not being directly measured by the study.

Is there one type of alcohol that is better at preventing heart attacks than another?

- Probably not. Many studies have looked at the type of alcohol consumed and the incidence of heart attacks but thus far the results are largely inconclusive. Red wine has been heralded for having extensive antioxidant properties that may contribute to the perceived cardiovascular benefit but these claims have yet to be substantiated.

