



How Much alcohol is safe to drink?

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N o n e !

That is, according to a recent study published in a prestigious medical journal, The Lancet (www.thelancet.com Vol 392 September 22, 2018). But for most people this is unrealistic and hard if not impossible to accept. It is so confusing. In the past, research showed some benefits of small amount of drinking. Now this recent research study reveals that no amount of alcohol is good for you. So, who should you believe? Let us see this.

Just like for everything else in life, some offer a counter argument for the conclusion of this recent research. "There is no safe level of drinking, but governments do not recommend that people avoid driving."

Spiegelhalter told the BBC. But this is not about government regulating the drinking. It is left to individual choices. It is just like smoking. The dangers of smoking are clearly stated on each pack of cigarettes. But smokers choose to ignore this and are willing to take the risk. Of course, their thinking and judgment is influenced by the addiction to smoking. The same can be said about alcohol consumption. The individual has to weigh the pros and cons and make a decision whether to drink or not.

Some research has shown that low levels of alcohol consumption (mostly in the form of red wine) can have a protective effect on heart disease. However, this is debatable. More recent research studies have challenged this. Besides, the modest benefit from low levels of alcohol

even if it exists, it is more than offset by the damage alcohol cause on many other organs.

Most experts agree that alcohol increases the risk of cancer. The risk increases with increasing amounts of alcohol consumed. Alcohol consumption has been linked to 60 acute and chronic diseases!

There are many ways in which drinking alcohol leads to damage to our bodies.

1. Acute intoxication (getting drunk). This can lead to injuries and poisoning. Alcohol poisoning is a common cause of death in college students who consume large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time.
2. Drinking alcohol can lead to impairments and potential self-harm, and aggressive or violent behaviors.
3. Chronic drinking results in damage to tissues of various organs e.g. liver, brain, eyes, heart and so on.
4. Motor vehicle accident
5. Vitamin deficiencies as a result of drinking.
6. Tendency to eat the wrong and unhealthy foods when drinking.
- 7.

All these effects are influenced also by how much alcohol has been consumed and how quickly.

In 2016, 2.8 million deaths were attributed to alcohol use worldwide and was the leading risk factor for premature death and disability among people aged 15–49 years. For younger people, the three leading causes of death linked to alcohol use were tuberculosis, road injuries and self-harm, according to the study. The authors of the recent study have concluded that the safest level of drinking is none.

Alcohol is socially acceptable. In fact, it is almost an essential ingredient in many social events. It is often referred to as a "social lubricant," even though it is not an essential element of social event. But, for some, it seems to serve a function of a catalyst. So, it is probably unrealistic to expect zero consumption as a goal. As they say, prudence is the key.

In conclusion, alcohol gives a buzz and a good feeling which does not last very long. You have to decide whether the price you pay for that buzz is worth it for you. Something to think about, isn't it?

SAMHIN, South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network, is a non-profit organization that strives to address the mental health needs of the South Asians.

If you or someone you know has a drinking problem and has a desire to quit visit www.samhin.org/alcoholics-anonymous/ or call 732-902-2561 to learn about free program or if you have any questions. You can also write to us at info@samhin.org.



AA
SOUTH ASIAN

South Asian Alcoholics Anonymous The First Presbyterian Church of Iselin

South Asian AA ... For anyone with a drinking problem and a desire to stop

For any questions, please contact:

Gurneet: 732-718-3841 (Punjabi and Hindi)
Dipak: 732-233-5938 (Gujarati and Hindi)
Chandru: 732-546-4309 (Telugu)
Manoj: 252-955-4662 (Gujarati and Hindi)
Devan: 732-519-2208 (Gujarati, Marathi and Hindi)

**AA Meetings (FREE)
Every Thursday
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ 08830
Note: Entrance on Middlesex Avenue**

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