

How Does Drinking Alcohol Affect Your Health?

皆さんは月にどのくらいお酒を飲んでいますか？今回は飲酒と健康リスクの研究に関する最新のニュースをお届けします。これまでは、適度にお酒を飲むことが健康に良いと言われてきましたが、最近の研究では、『less is better』（少ない方が良い）という考え方が注目されているようです。ちなみに、アルコール摂取は英語で「alcohol intake」、適度な量は「moderate amount」と言います。ぜひ本文を読んで、飲酒と健康の関係について議論してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Past research suggested drinking alcohol in **moderate** amounts could be good for the heart. But a growing number of public health experts now advise people to limit alcohol intake as much as possible to improve health.

One of those experts is Dr. Timothy Naimi. He is with the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Naimi told The Associated Press, "Drinking less is a great way to be healthier."

Earlier this month, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called for changing his agency's existing health warning on alcoholic drinks to include cancer risks. Such a change would require approval from **Congress**.

What is the harm in drinking alcohol?

The Surgeon General's proposed change is linked to research suggesting that drinking alcohol raises the risk of several types of cancer – including colon, liver, breast, mouth and throat.

Alcohol breaks down in the body into a substance called acetaldehyde. This chemical can damage cells and stop them from repairing themselves. The process can create conditions for cancer to grow.

Naimi said estimates show thousands of U.S. deaths could be prevented each year if people followed government [dietary](#) guidelines on drinking alcohol. The guidelines advise men to limit themselves to two drinks or fewer per day and women to one drink or fewer per day. An example of one drink would be equal to one 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine or one serving of liquor.

U.S. Surgeon General Murthy noted there are about 100,000 alcohol-related cancer cases in the United States each year. And, about 20,000 alcohol-related cancer deaths are reported yearly. "As you consider whether or how much to drink, keep in mind that less is better when it comes to cancer risk," Murthy wrote on the social media service X.

What about limited drinking?

Medical experts say the idea that moderate drinking can cause health improvements, or benefits, came from imperfect studies. The research compared groups of people based on how much they drank, with amounts usually measured at only one point in time. Since some earlier studies did not follow rules about what groups were measured, researchers say they did not effectively prove cause and effect.

Naimi said people who report drinking moderately generally have higher levels of education, higher [earnings](#) and better resources for health care. He explained that when those elements are considered, "The benefits tend to disappear."

Another problem, Naimi noted, was that most studies did not include younger people. Almost half of people who die from alcohol-related causes do so before the age of 50. Naimi said the studied groups did not effectively represent all drinkers. This likely created "an appearance" of a benefit for moderate drinkers that is not real, he added.

What do international guidelines say?

Health guidelines related to alcohol intake have wide differences from country to country. But the overall message today is that drinking less is better for health.

Britain, France, Denmark, Holland and Australia recently examined new [evidence](#) and lowered their guidelines for safe amounts of alcohol. Ireland plans to begin requiring cancer warnings on alcohol containers starting in 2026.

Carina Ferreira-Borges is an adviser on alcohol for the World Health Organization in Europe. She said scientists had changed their minds from earlier research. This is because more recent studies suggest drinking alcohol is linked “to over 200 health conditions, including cancers, cardiovascular diseases and injuries.”

Naimi said, "The simple message that's best supported by the evidence is that, if you drink, less is better when it comes to health."

I'm Andrew Smith.

Carla K. Johnson reported this story for the Associated Press. Jill Robbins adapted it for Learning English.

Source: How Does Drinking Alcohol Affect Your Health?

[VOA](#)

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. moderate (adj.) not too little or too much; medium (amount of)

A moderate amount of exercise is needed for good health.

2. Congress (n.) the upper and lower houses of the lawmaking branch of the US government

Yesterday, Congress decided to give more money to the earthquake relief effort.

3. dietary (adj.) related to food intake

Nutritionists change dietary guidelines when they learn more about food and the human body.

4. earnings (n.) money that a person gets for working

I need to increase my earnings to save for retirement.

5. evidence (n.) facts or data that show something is true

There is no evidence that smartphones can cause cancer.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How have the opinions of health experts on alcohol changed in recent years?
2. What kinds of health risks come with drinking alcohol?
3. What are the US Surgeon General's guidelines for drinking alcohol?
4. What do you think about the plans of the US and Ireland to put cancer warnings on alcohol labels?
5. Many traditional ceremonies and celebrations around the world include alcohol. Should they continue to do this?