

Less or No Alcohol Is Better for Health

今回は、アルコール摂取量と健康リスクの関係に関する記事です。少しのお酒でも健康への影響がある可能性があるとして、各国で飲酒を見直す動きが強まっています。英語で「moderate」は「適度な」「ほどよい」という意味で、**moderate drinking**（適度な飲酒）や**moderate exercise**（適度な運動）といった使い方がされます。お酒との付き合い方をどう考えるかは、国や文化によっても異なります。あなたの国には、飲み方に関する文化やルールがありますか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Alcohol is often **consumed** in social gatherings from happy hours after work to birthday parties on the weekend. Drinking some alcohol is normal and believed to be good for heart health.

However, new research may have put an end to that idea.

Dr. Timothy Naimi directs the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria. He said, "Drinking less is a great way to be healthier."

Are drinking guidelines changing?

Guidelines, or advice, for drinking alcohol differ greatly from country to country. But overall, the advice has been moving toward drinking less.

Britain, France, Denmark, Holland, and Australia recently reviewed new evidence and lowered the suggested amount of alcohol consumption.

Ireland went further than most. It will require cancer warning descriptions on alcohol starting in 2026.

Carina Ferreira-Borges is an adviser for alcohol at the World Health Organization office for Europe. She said scientists see “evidence linking alcohol to over 200 health conditions, including cancers, [cardiovascular](#) diseases and injuries.”

Overall, people may have already been moving toward drinking less alcohol. Social calendar events called “Dry January” and “Sober October” are celebrated with non-alcoholic drinks. “Dry” means no alcohol. And a sober person is not affected by alcohol.

“People my age are way more accepting of it,” said Tessa Weber. The 28-year-old from Austin, Texas said she stopped drinking for Dry January after seeing how alcohol increased her anxiety. She liked the results — better sleep, more energy — and has stuck with it.

Flawed studies on alcohol

The idea that alcohol can be heart-friendly came from imperfect studies comparing groups of people by how much they drink.

Usually, alcohol consumption was measured at one point in time. And none of them compare drinkers and non-drinkers. As a result, these studies could not prove cause and effect.

People who report drinking an average amount of alcohol usually have higher income, education, and better health care. “It turns out that when you adjust for those things, the benefits tend to disappear,” Dr. Naimi said.

Most studies also did not include younger people. And almost half of the people who die from alcohol-related causes die before the age of 50.

“If you’re studying people who survived into middle age, didn’t quit drinking because of a problem and didn’t become a heavy drinker, that’s a very select group,” Naimi said. “It creates an appearance of a benefit for [moderate](#) drinkers.”

Other studies challenge the idea that alcohol has benefits.

These studies compare people with a certain gene variant that makes it unpleasant to drink to people without this gene variant. People with this gene tend to drink very little or not at all. One of these studies found people with the gene variant have a lower risk of heart disease. This may supply more proof that alcohol does not protect people from heart problems.

How many drinks per day is safe?

So, how many alcoholic drinks can people safely have every day? That depends.

Drinking alcohol raises the risk of several kinds of cancer, including colon, liver, breast, mouth, and throat. Alcohol breaks down in the body into a [substance](#) called acetaldehyde. This substance can damage your cells and stop them from repairing themselves. That creates the conditions for cancer to grow.

Thousands of U.S. deaths per year could be prevented if people follow the U.S. government's guidelines. They advise men to limit themselves to two drinks or fewer per day and women to one drink or fewer per day, Naimi said.

One drink is the equivalent of about one can of beer, a glass of wine, or a very small glass of hard alcohol.

Naimi served on an advisory committee. That committee wanted to lower the guideline for men to one drink per day. However, that advice was rejected when the federal guideline came out in 2020.

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

On its website, the National Institute of Health says some people should not consume alcohol at all. The agency says to avoid alcohol completely if you are:

- Taking medications that [interact](#) with alcohol
- Having a medical condition that can be made worse by drinking
- Under the age of 21, the minimum legal drinking age in the U.S.
- Recovering from alcohol use disorder or unable to control the amount you drink
- Pregnant or might become pregnant

Carla K. Johnson reported this story for The Associated Press. Anna Matteo adapted the report for Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

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

1. consume (v.) to take into the body by eating or drinking

The average person needs to consume about one gram of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

2. cardiovascular (adj.) related to the heart and the movement of blood in the body

Regular exercise is good for cardiovascular health.

3. moderate (adj.) a medium amount of something

My sister usually gets a moderate amount of sleep each night.

4. substance (n.) a material

Polyphenol is a substance in apples and berries that may have positive effects on health.

5. interact (v.) to have a negative effect on a medicine or drug by mixing with it

Grapefruit juice can interact with several drugs, including medicine for migraine headaches.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What does the US government recommend for alcohol consumption? What does Dr. Timothy Naimi recommend?
2. According to Dr. Naimi, In the recent past, why did people think that moderate drinking could have health benefits?
3. According to the National Institute of Health, who should not drink any alcohol?
4. What is the current trend regarding alcohol in Japan these days? Do people seem to consume more or less?
5. If you do not want to drink alcohol at a social gathering, what can you do or say?