

MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

August 2014

The Balancing Act of Alcohol Drinking

Some of us enjoy an alcoholic beverage from time to time, and sometimes a bit more. Alcohol plays a huge part in our social lives and in the Canadian culture, but it takes quite a balancing act to sort out all the pros and cons related to drinking. Find out in this issue what scientific research has found, and decide for yourself how you can drink and manage your health at the same time.

The Benefits – Yes it's true. In the scientific world, there certainly has been some evidence showing health benefits associated with light to moderate drinking. More specifically, these are benefits for our long-term heart health. Keep in mind that benefits found are related only to light to moderate amounts of drinking, with maximum benefits seen with a half to one drink on average per day.

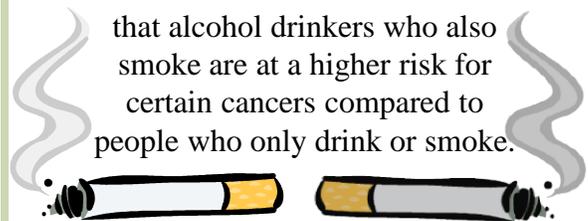
How much is "one drink?"



Image sourced from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

Did You Know?

Alcohol and smoking increases each other's effect on raising risk for certain cancers. This means that alcohol drinkers who also smoke are at a higher risk for certain cancers compared to people who only drink or smoke.



The Harm – On the other hand, there are many health risks related to alcohol that arguably outweighs the benefits. From a cancer prevention standpoint, no amount of alcohol is considered safe. Any amount of alcohol drinking is related to cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, rectum and breast. Complete avoidance of alcohol is also recommended for women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant as it can cause brain damage to the baby and fetal alcohol syndrome. Other serious conditions related to alcohol drinking include diseases of the pancreas and liver. As consumption of alcohol goes up, the risk for these diseases also increases.

A Balancing Act – Alcohol plays a big part in our social lives and in the Canadian culture. It is no wonder that despite of its harmful effects, many Canadians still choose to include alcohol as a part of their lifestyle. It is important to understand that no matter what amount of alcohol you drink, there will always be a risk to your health. The balancing act here, if you choose to drink, is to drink in the safest way possible. *For men, that means drinking no more than 3 drinks a day, to a weekly maximum of 15 drinks a week. For women, limit to no more than 2 drinks a day, to a weekly maximum of 10 drinks a week.* If you currently drink, any amount you reduce will give benefits to your health. And of course, if you currently do not drink, keep up your efforts for good health!

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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Sangria Mocktail

A nice cold refreshing cocktail on a hot summer day can really hit the spot. Unfortunately, that cocktail is usually accompanied with alcohol and loads of sugar. Try this sangria recipe that will bring you the same amount of satisfaction, but with more health benefits than its alcoholic counterpart.



Makes 3 large cups

Ingredients:

1 cup	boiling water
1	black tea bag
1/16 tsp	ground cinnamon
1 ½ cup	cranberry pomegranate juice, low calorie type
½ cup	freshly squeezed orange juice (1½ orange)
½	orange, sliced into thin rounds
½	lemon, sliced into thin rounds
½	lime, sliced into thin rounds
½ cup	carbonated water
¼ cup	fresh mix of blueberries and strawberries, slightly mashed (optional)

Directions:

1. Put tea bag and cinnamon in a cup. Add boiling water and steep for five minutes. Then discard tea bag.
2. In a jar, combine tea and remaining ingredients EXCEPT carbonated water. Refrigerate for 1 hour or longer if desired.
3. Mix in carbonated water just before serving .

Optional: For more fruit flavour, add in ¼ cup of slightly mashed blueberries and strawberries before refrigerating.

Nutrition information (per serving): 25 calories, Fat 0g (0% DV), Carbohydrate 6g (2% DV), Protein 0g, Sodium 17mg (1% DV), Fibre 0g (1% DV), Sugar 5g, Vitamin C 85% DV