

07 HITLIST HEALTH

4-57 The range/number in millions of bubbles in a standard 750 ml of champagne!

Hic, Hic, Hooray!

BENEFITS OF THE TIPPLE

From President Obama to James Bond, everyone seems to be in the pink of health. Touch wood. And here's probably why. Did you know that your favourite tippie could actually be protecting you from falling ill? The GUIDE tells you why it works, when consumed in moderation. Bottoms up!

Who would have thought that the frothy beer, the smoky whiskey or even that glass of luscious red wine could actually be beneficial? If recent studies are anything to go by alcohol may not be half as bad as it has always been imagined to be. According to Eric Rimm, Sc.D, associate professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, one of the most consistent findings in recent nutrition research is that moderate alcohol consumption can improve health and lead to a longer life.

The dual-sided nature of alcohol has often been compared to Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. For years, there have been debates on whether alcohol kills or cures, whether it is a tonic or a poison? Years of research say that it can be both, good and evil — it depends on your consumption.

Time to say cheers

According to data available at the Harvard School of Public Health, a review of more than 100 prospective studies showed that moderate drinking could actually reduce cardiovascular health causes by up to 40 per cent.

In 2010, a study published in The Archives of Internal Medicine found that women who had one or two drinks a day were less likely to gain weight than those did not drink. Yes, it's true that moderate alcohol consumption can also help those afflicted with diabetes.

A 2005, Diabetes Care report found that up to a drink a day for women and two for men could actually reduce the condition by 30 per cent. Alcohol, basically, increases levels of a hormone that improves insulin sensitivity.

According to Dr Vijay

Surase, Interventional Cardiologist at the Jupiter Hospital, Thane, numerous studies do suggest that moderate alcohol consumption helps reduce heart disease by raising HDL-high density lipoprotein or (good) cholesterol and reducing plaque accumulation in the arteries. "Alcohol has a mild anti-coagulating effect that keeps platelets from clumping together to form clots. Both actions can reduce heart attacks but exactly how alcohol influences is still unclear."

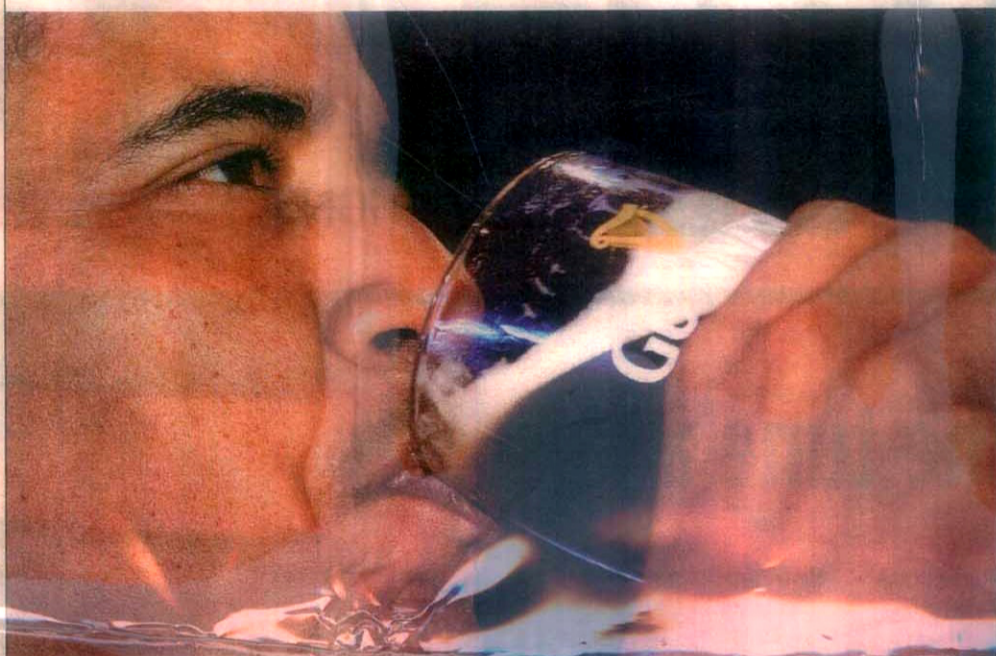
How much is too much?

A pioneering study led by Dr Kenneth Mukamal, an internist at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, also in Boston, examined the roles of drinking patterns and heart disease and found, after a 12-year follow-up, that men who consumed alcohol between three and seven days a week had fewer heart attacks than those who drank, everyday.

Almost all studies seem to suggest that what counts is how much you drink rather than what you drink. Dr Surase says that moderate alcohol consumption is usually classified as one-two drinks per day for men and a drink a day for women.

One drink is defined as one-and-a half (fl oz) of 80 proof spirits such as bourbon, scotch, vodka or gin, 4 fl oz for wine and 12 fl oz for beer. Surase goes on to caution that anything more than these moderate amounts can cause heart-related problems such as high blood pressure, stroke and irregular heartbeats. "The average drink has 100-200 calories and these often add to fat of the body, which in turn, may increase the risk of heart ailments."

WHAT'S YOUR POISON?



BEER Fans of beer rejoice, recent research shows that beer can help in small quantities, of course. Restrict your guzzling to 12 fl oz beers a day for women and maybe two for men.

DRINK UP: A 2009 study at Tufts University showed that senior citizens who drank a couple of beers daily had stronger bone

density than those who preferred wine. However, anything more than two also leads to fractures. A study at the TNO Nutrition and Food Research Institute, in The Netherlands found that beer drinkers had 30 per cent higher levels of Vitamin B6 levels in their blood than teetotalers and twice as much as wine drinkers.

American President Barack Obama is known to enjoy his lager. PIC/AFP

> The movie Sideways celebrated the wonders of wine, in life across every kind of relationship

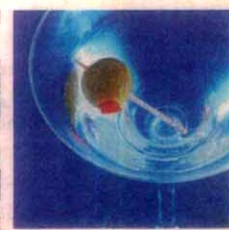


WINE This is the tippie most commonly known for protecting the heart, especially when it's red. It is said that the low rate of heart disease in France can be attributed to the consumption of red wine. Ideally, not more than a glass a day will keep the doctor away.

DRINK UP: Red wine has resveratrol, which is a compound with antioxidant properties. The antioxidants prevent the body from damaging the cells.

VODKA Despite the recent controversy about 007 shifting allegiance to Heineken, there is no pushing the fact that no movie drink has made an imprint on public memory as Bond's shaken but not stirred vodka martini.

DRINK UP: Russian belief prescribes vodka as the miracle cure for everything from a common cold to a headache and even wounds. Though alcohol in all forms is meant to relax, vodka is said to be effective, especially when it came to busting stress. The magic amount is 25-30ml for women and around 40 ml for men, if had daily.



< Halle Berry and Pierce Brosnan in Die Another Day. The Vodka Martini (right) is symbolic to every Bond film

> Don Draper from the series Mad Men has brought the cool back into whiskey.



WHISKEY It's the choice of drink for television's 'it' man of the moment, Don Draper, the dapper advertising honcho in the nostalgia soaked series Mad Men. Fermenting rye, wheat, corn or barley creates whiskey. According to the US Department of Agriculture, 1.5 oz of whiskey contains zero fat and it is common knowledge that a low-fat diet is always healthy.

DRINK UP: Ellagic acid is an antioxidant that destroys cancer cells. According to research conducted at the 2005 EuroMedLab conference in Scotland, whiskey has more ellagic acid than any other alcohol.

ALCOHOL HAS A MILD ANTI-COAGULATING EFFECT THAT KEEPS PLATELETS FROM CLUMPING TOGETHER TO FORM CLOTS.

- DR VIJAY SURASE, Interventional Cardiologist

DID YOU KNOW?

> Tonic originally was put together as an anti-malaria concoction in colonial India. Quinine was added to carbonated water to give Indian Tonic and mixed with gin to make it more appealing.

> Sweeter (sec or doux) sparkling wines, while less popular, make an excellent digestif, either served with a dessert or by themselves.

When it's not cool

While not as potentially alarming as excessive drinking, moderate drinking comes with its own share of risks. There is a fair amount of research that says that breast cancer rates are higher among women who drink moderately. That apart, people with hepatitis C should avoid drinks completely as it may cause permanent liver damage. Dr Deepak Chaturvedi, Physician Endocrinologist, Diabetologist, Anti-Aging specialist and Bariatrician at the Amaya Anti-aging Clinic says that even though studies may suggest that wine in moderate amounts may be beneficial on cardio metabolic health, as a physician he does not advise drinking to any patient.

"All alcoholic drinks may affect one's health, adversely. Molybdenum content of beer has carcinogenic effects. Besides, everyone knows about the beer belly phenomenon. Alcohol in excess affects all the organs of the body from the brain to the skin"

Surase seconds Chaturvedi and says that the association between alcohol and health has been known since ages. "Alcohol ravages almost every organ in the body and the heart is no exception. It affects the heart and circulation in many ways."