

## HEART FAILURE AND ALCOHOL

Is a glass of red wine really good for the heart? The truth isn't really clear cut. For close to 150 years alcohol has been associated with a variety of cardiovascular disease. Alcohol consumption in itself has been linked to conditions other than heart failure, such as arrhythmia, myocardial infarction, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes. All three of those diagnosis can be precursors to heart failure. There is a variety of studies, along with popular beliefs, that give us a range of answers and questions when it comes to alcohol and heart failure. Universally studies show that large consumptions of alcohol can lead to cardiomyopathy and cardiac induced heart failure. When it comes to light-to-moderate consumption of alcohol, there is a selection of studies that suggest that alcohol, particularly red wine, may have cardiac benefits. However, these studies that are done in relation to light-to-moderate drinking, do not necessarily take into consideration individuals genetics, drinking patterns, or eating habits that may also influence the individual effect of alcohol on their heart. Because of the high risks associated with heart failure, it remains most important that we focus on preventative measures or current improvements that we can make.

Here is what you should know before you raise your next glass:

- Large amounts of alcohol consumption dose play a role in the development of heart failure.
- Although some studies may support red wine in heart health, at a light-to-moderate level, they do not take into consideration predispositions or additional conditions you might have
- Several genes play important roles in alcohol metabolism
- Light-to-moderate drinking can be up for interpretation, for some even one drink may be too many
- Drinking patterns may contribute to whether alcohol has a positive or negative effect
- Long term alcohol use has been associated with left ventricular dysfunction
- Individuals who drink more than two drinks a days have a significant increase in hypertension, and this further increases with those that drink more than five drinks per day.
- Improvements in the hearts ability to function and pump blood have been directly correlated in an individual's ability to abstain or decrease alcohol consumption

Treatment for heart failure related to alcohol include:

- Abstinence
- Medication therapies (vasodilators, diuretics, beta blockers, ect.)
- Electrolyte and mineral therapies
- And, anticoagulation (sometimes)

**Alcohol can have negative effects on the heart. The best thing you can do is to abstain from alcohol consumption if you have heart failure or a cardiac related condition. If you choose to drink, stick to light-to-moderate levels of drinking, no more than 1-2 drinks per day or 3-9 per week.**

### References

Djoussé L, Gaziano JM. Alcohol consumption and heart failure: a systematic review. *Curr Atheroscler Rep.* 2008;10(2):117-120. doi:10.1007/s11883-008-0017-z. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2365733/>

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