

It's OK for men with high blood pressure to have a drink or two, new study finds

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A prospective cohort study of nearly 12,000 men with hypertension found that men who drank moderately had reduced risk of heart attacks.

A glass of beer, a glass of wine, or a shot of liquor each counts as one drink.

Moderate consumption of alcohol is known to be linked to a lower risk of heart disease. But, since alcohol can increase blood pressure, would the same be true for men who have high blood pressure?

The new study, published in the January 2, 2007, issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, is based on data from the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study. It found that men with high blood pressure can have one or two drinks a day without increasing risk for heart attack or stroke.

"Men diagnosed with hypertension probably get a lot of advice on how to change their lifestyle, physical activity, and diet," said Joline Beulens, MSc, the study's lead author. "This study indicates that if they drink alcohol in moderation they may not need to change their drinking habits."

Beulens reiterated that alcohol consumption of more than three drinks a day raises blood pressure and risk of hypertension, "so our findings are not a license for men with hypertension to overindulge."

Beulens was a PhD-fellow at TNO Quality of Life and Wageningen

University in the Netherlands at the time of the study and was working as a visiting scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health, which sponsors the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study.

An accompanying editorial, by Victor Kipnis, PhD, at the National Cancer Institute, and others, discusses measurement error in nutritional epidemiology studies. Because of the current limitations of procedures and reference instruments, the editorial writers say, "we cannot assume that corrected estimates of diet-disease associations in any single study are definitive."

Source: American College of Physicians

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