

# Alcohol may combat diabetes, in moderation

January 14 2011, By Hans Wolkers

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A couple of beers a day can be part of a healthy lifestyle, and even reduce the risk of developing diabetes, Dutch researchers say.

Beer helps against diabetes: a slogan from the Beer Knowledge Institute? No, PhD researcher Michel Joosten's message to the world. Joosten found that moderate drinkers - which means a maximum of two units a day for men and one for women - ran about 40 percent less risk of developing diabetes than did non-drinkers. Joosten received his PhD from research organization TNO and the Wageningen University Human Nutrition chair group on Wednesday 12 January.

Joosten researched the link between alcohol and the incidence of diabetes in 35,000 Dutch people who were monitored over ten years. 'Even in people with a healthy lifestyle, it appeared that moderate drinking reduces the risk of diabetes by about 40 percent', he states. 'That goes right against the claims made by some researchers that the health benefits of alcohol disappear if you have a [healthy lifestyle](#).'

The link found between alcohol and diabetes does not constitute hard evidence of a cause-effect correlation, however. For this reason, Joosten got a number of test subjects to alternate between [drinking alcohol](#) and abstaining over a period of several weeks, and studied the consequences in terms of the indicators and risk factors for diabetes. 'Alcohol intake caused an increase in the hormone adiponectin in the blood. And high adiponectin levels correlate with a lower risk of diabetes', says Joosten. 'A number of inflammation factors in the blood went down too, while the [gene expression](#) in [white blood cells](#) changed to a more anti-

inflammatory profile.' This was a significant discovery as diabetes may be caused by mild but [chronic infections](#).

The study is pretty much unique, according to Joosten, because it combines research on population, on individuals and on molecular science. 'The results all show a clear link between [moderate drinking](#) and a reduced risk of diabetes. From this combination of studies it seems very likely that it is indeed the alcohol that reduces the risk of diabetes.

Provided by Wageningen University

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