

Moderate alcohol intake may slow good cholesterol's decline

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In a study of 80,000 healthy Chinese adults, moderate drinking was associated with slower declines in high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or good cholesterol, over time, according to a preliminary study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2016.

Researchers followed [alcohol consumption](#) and HDL levels for more than six years in this community-based study. They grouped the adults by self-reported drinking status, from never, to [heavy drinking](#) (more than one daily serving of alcohol for women and more than two daily servings for men). They found:

- HDL levels decreased over time in all participants, but [moderate alcohol consumption](#) was associated with a slower decline compared to non-drinkers or heavy drinkers.
- Moderate drinkers (men drinking one to two alcohol servings daily and women a half to one serving daily) had the slowest decline - 0.17 mmol/per year.
- Heavy drinking nearly eliminated this benefit with only .0008 mmol per year decline.

The researchers also analyzed whether the benefits of alcohol consumption depended on the type alcohol consumed. They found levels of HDL also decreased more slowly with self-reported moderate beer consumption. Among hard liquor drinkers, only self-reported light (men drinking less than 1 serving a day; women drinking zero to .4 servings daily) to moderate drinking resulted in slower rates of HDL decline.

There weren't enough wine drinkers to test wine's effects on HDL, researchers said. Further studies are needed to determine if this effect is observed in other populations, such as a U.S. population, and whether there are significant and clinically-relevant outcomes based on the type of alcohol consumed.

The American Heart Association recommends consuming alcohol in moderation if you already drink but cautions people to not start drinking and consult your doctor on your risks and benefits of consuming alcohol in moderation.

Provided by American Heart Association

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