

[How Wine Can Help the Heart](#)

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Healing

How Wine Can Help the Heart

Doctor Tandavan

Newsweek (January 22, 1996) recently published an article on the great benefits of preventing heart attacks by the drinking of wine. In fact, one investigator exaggerates to say that we are at risk if we do not drink wine. A little common sense evaluation will bring us to a more reasonable truth.

Perhaps we should first understand how the alcohol in wines effects the body. The first response of our body to alcohol is to stimulate acid production in the stomach. This may stimulate the appetite. Secondly, it affects the brain to bring about a loss of inhibitions and provide some feelings of serenity. Ultimately, however, the alcohol produces free radicals and energy without any nutritious value. The alcohol also acts as a vasodilator; that is, it dilates the blood vessels leading to a faint blush and possibly a lowering of the blood pressure. Alcohol also tends to decrease the "stickiness" of red blood cells which helps to prevent their agglutination and blood clot formation.

Another aspect of wine is its taste, which is very complex. It is primarily astringent in taste; it may also have some sweet and bitter components. As we know, these tastes will act upon the doshas, the overall effect being to decrease the pitta dosha; that is cooling. Since the wine tends also to be drying, there will be an increase in vata and a slight decrease in kapha. After the digestion of the sweet, bitter and astringent tastes, a pungent vipaka [post-digestive effect] is produced. This may lead to intestinal gas and constipation and may also decrease genital secretions and semen. The bouquet of wine is also a very strong stimulant to the appetite, a relaxant of tensions, and helps to visualize pleasing surroundings and delightful fantasies. The fragrance of wine is even more complex than the taste and adds greatly to its appreciation and beneficial effects upon our physiology.

Investigators have cautioned against excessive use of wine or other alcoholic beverages. Mead from honey acts in much the same manner as the wines. Beer and hard liquors do not have the same effects, it seems, upon the prevention of heart attacks, perhaps because beer is somewhat higher in calories and different in taste, and the hard liquors are concentrated alcohol emphasizing its drying and soporific effects. The wine should be consumed with food in order to decrease the rapid absorption of the alcohol, thus decreasing its adverse effects. It is suggested that no more than two glasses a day is to be consumed, for its effect on preventing coronary heart disease.

A caution: Many wines have added nitrites, to which many people are allergic. One should attempt to find wines without this addition of potentially toxic substances. Another note is that this amount of alcohol will antidote any homeopathic

remedies that are being used.

So we readily see that wine in itself can be beneficial to the body and aid in preventing coronary heart disease. It also has a great impact upon ones lifestyle, giving the ability to relax and truly enjoy food that is taken. This settling effect is also very powerful in coronary artery disease prevention. The drinking of wine with meals may make each meal a celebration of the good life and the proper use of the gifts of life. The combination of the physiological effects of wine and the relaxed lifestyle, as Ayurveda discusses, are very potent and enjoyable ways to help assure a body free of coronary artery disease.

Dr. Devananda Tandavan, MD, is a member of the American Medical Association, the International College of Surgeons, the Society of Nuclear Medicine, the American Federation of Astrologers, the International Center of Homeopathy--and more. Send questions to Hinduism Today, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746 USA. Access Dr. Tandavan's WWW home page at:[http://www.Hinduism Today.kauai.hi.us/ashram/](http://www.HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us/ashram/)