



abstinence is best

The festive season seems to give license to indulge in alcohol. Yet the many proven health risks far outweigh any suggested benefits for the heart.

You may have heard that alcohol causes cirrhosis of the liver, brain damage and memory loss, but did you know it also promotes cancer? For example, the breast-cancer risk is 35 per cent higher among women who drink three to four standard drinks per day, and a staggering 67 per cent higher in those who indulge more than four daily!

In the immediate short-term, the intoxicating effect of the fluid increases the risk of injury, interpersonal violence and accidental death, as well as affecting your broader longer-term health, such as raising stress levels, causing weight gain, and promoting sleep disorders and sexual dysfunction.

the suggested benefit

If you are over 40 and at risk of heart disease, drinking very small amounts of alcohol (one glass of wine per day) may be helpful. However, much greater benefits are gained through a healthful diet, regular exercise and giving up smoking, all without raising your

cancer risk! The pros of alcohol with respect to heart disease don't apply to young people or those at low risk for this disease in the first place.

how much?

The World Cancer Research Fund argues against drinking alcohol. The National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia is more lenient and suggests the following limits:

Men—no more than four standard drinks a day on average;
Women—no more than two standard drinks a day on average

Food regulations require the number of standard drinks be declared on labelling. However, it is still easy to consume more than you think you're getting, as actual serve sizes are often larger than the defined standard drink. For example, a 180 ml average restaurant serve of wine (12 per cent alcohol) is the equal of 1.8 standard drinks!

Turn to **page 28** for a delicious alcohol-free cooler recipe to try this summer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

AUSTRALIA: Locked Bag 7,
Central Coast Mail Centre, NSW
2252 Phone: 1800 673 392

NEW ZEALAND: Private Bag
92127, Auckland, New Zealand
Phone: 0800 100 257

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