

CAMP HILL, Pa. (April 15, 2024) — More research is revealing that toasting to good health with alcoholic beverages can have the opposite effect. New guidance recommends drinking less as a lower-risk option benefitting total health, including the mouth and eyes.

"The sobering truth is the less you drink alcohol, the better it is for your overall health," said Anthony Warren, DDS, dental director, United Concordia Dental. "[Binge or heavy drinking](#) can cause a variety of short-term health effects, including slurred speech, double vision, head pain and dry mouth. In the long-term, it contributes to more than 200 health conditions like liver disease, cancers, stomach ulcers, and anxiety and depression, as well as gum disease, tooth decay and changes in eye structure."



Last year, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction [adjusted its alcohol and health guidance](#), reducing the low-risk amount of alcohol from an average of 10 drinks per week to two. This change was prompted due to recent data showing that alcohol use causes nearly 7,000 cases of cancer deaths each year in Canada.

In another study, the International Agency for Research on Cancer [found](#) that reducing or stopping alcohol consumption completely can decrease the risk of oral and esophageal cancers.

Drinking less alcohol can have many health benefits, including:

- **Ensuring better hydration.** Alcohol dehydrates the body by causing the kidneys to expel more water than normal, especially drying out the mouth and eyes. Drinking less alcohol and more water helps your body get back to regular hydration levels.
- **Lowering the risk of oral cancer.** When you drink, your body can create a chemical that damages its DNA and prevents repair. When DNA is damaged, it can cause uncontrolled cell growth resulting in cancerous tumors. Following the drinking guidance in the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) can help lower cancer risk.
- **Lowering sugar intake.** Alcohol metabolizes into sugar, which attracts bacteria and can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. The body's blood sugar levels go back to normal after 24 hours without a drink.
- **Improving circulation.** Too much alcohol can negatively impact how the heart functions and blood flows, leading to clogged blood vessels and cell damage from lack of oxygen. Reducing alcohol intake can help regenerate red blood cells resulting in better blood flow and oxygen supply to your organs, including the eyes. Maintaining good circulation helps lessen the risk of early onset age-related macular degeneration, which impairs central vision in the eyes.

For more information on alcohol and your health, visit the National Institutes of Health's [Rethinking Drinking website](#). Check out the Oral Health Resources section at [UnitedConcordia.com](#) for additional information on dental health.

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