



February is notable for ground hogs, valentines, and cardiovascular health and the health benefits associated with moderate wine consumption. Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of mortality of men and women in the United States.

Scientific information concerning wine and heart health is documented since the 1948 Wine and Heart Health Data in the Framingham Study. Moderate drinking is defined as 1 drink in women/2 drinks in men and based on 5 oz. of 12% alcohol as in wine, 12 oz. of 6% beer and 1 ½ oz. of 40 proof spirits. Overall risks of coronary artery disease, angina pectoris, ischemic heart disease, atherosclerosis, ischemic stroke, congestive heart failure and type 2-diabetes show decreased event-related morbidity and mortality with moderate consumption.

Some studies indicate all alcohol consumption provides benefit while others confer a unique benefit to wine. Alcohol shows a significant improvement in good cholesterol and decreases blood thickening factors like fibrinogen and platelet-aggregating factors, and lowers inflammatory markers like C-reactive protein. Wine acts as an anti-oxidant, specifically due to phenols and flavenoids. Resveratrol is a compound found in wine that is thought to be a potent anti-oxidant but human studies are lacking.

Moderation is key and instrumental to the positive impact that wine has on health. The J-shaped curve demonstrates that moderate drinking decreases all-cause mortality but that benefit is lost with abstention and heavy drinking.

In vino veritas!