

Alcohol Use and Dementia

Have you wondered if alcohol increases dementia risk as you age? Well, according to a new (2023) South Korean study with nearly four million adults, the answer is not a straightforward "Yes," or "No." This study looked for a potential association between alcohol use and dementia outcomes. Researchers found that for the prevention of dementia, mild-to-moderate drinkers need to avoid future increases in alcohol consumption and heavy drinkers should reduce current drinking levels. The study also suggested that non-drinkers should not be encouraged to start drinking alcohol as a way to reduce dementia risk.

Researchers also reported that alcohol is known to damage brain cells, impair memory, and harm other functions. Current U.S. dietary guidelines urge adults to drink in moderation by limiting alcohol intake to two drinks or less in a day for men, and one drink or less in a day for women. The **key takeaway** from the study is that that even small reductions in alcohol consumption can help reduce dementia risk.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2023/02/18/npr-alcohol-drinking-dementia-risk-south-korea-study>

Signs and Symptoms of dementia:

- Asking the same questions
- Becoming disoriented in familiar areas
- Changes in personality
- Confusion
- Difficulty focusing, reasoning, or solving problems
- Difficulty learning new things
- Forgetting recent things, such as events or conversations, or the names of people they know well
- Impaired judgment
- Memory loss
- New difficulty managing money or paying bills
- Problems with balance or coordination
- Referring to familiar objects with unusual words
- Trouble controlling their emotions
- Trouble speaking or reading and writing
- Unusual visual changes not attributed to aging

Other sources suggested that people who binge drink or drink heavily are more likely to develop dementia and be diagnosed at an earlier age when compared to nondrinkers. The dementia risk increases as people drink more heavily and over longer periods of time.

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