

Red wine vs. white? It makes no difference when it comes to breast-cancer risk

March 9 2009

The largest study of its kind to evaluate the effect of red versus white wine on breast-cancer risk concludes that both are equal offenders when it comes to increasing breast-cancer risk. The results of the study, led by researchers at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, were published in the March issue of *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*.

"We were interested in teasing out red wine's effects on breast-cancer risk. There is reason to suspect that [red wine](#) might have beneficial effects based on previous studies of heart disease and prostate cancer," said lead author Polly Newcomb, Ph.D., M.P.H., head of the [Cancer Prevention](#) Program in the Public Health Sciences Division at the Hutchinson Center. "The general evidence is that [alcohol consumption](#) overall increases breast-cancer risk, but the other studies made us wonder whether red wine might in fact have some positive value."

Instead, Newcomb and colleagues found no compelling reason to choose Chianti over Chardonnay.

"We found no difference between red or [white wine](#) in relation to breast-cancer risk. Neither appears to have any benefits," Newcomb said. "If a woman drinks, she should do so in moderation - no more than one drink a day. And if a woman chooses red wine, she should do so because she likes the taste, not because she thinks it may reduce her risk of [breast cancer](#)," she said.

The researchers found that women who consumed 14 or more drinks per

week, regardless of the type (wine, liquor or beer), faced a 24 percent increase in breast cancer compared with non-drinkers.

For the study, the researchers interviewed 6,327 women with breast cancer and 7,558 age-matched controls about their frequency of alcohol consumption (red wine, white wine, liquor and beer) and other breast-cancer risk factors, such as age at first pregnancy, family history of breast cancer and postmenopausal hormone use. The study participants, ages 20 to 69, were from Wisconsin, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The frequency of alcohol consumption was similar in both groups, and equal proportions of women in both groups reported consuming red and white wine.

Source: Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Citation: Red wine vs. white? It makes no difference when it comes to breast-cancer risk (2009, March 9) retrieved 18 March 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-03-red-wine-white-difference-breast-cancer.html>

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