

Alcohol consumption after breast cancer diagnosis may increase recurrence risk

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In the Life After Cancer Epidemiology (LACE) study, 1,897 participants diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer between 1997 and 2000 and recruited on average 2 years post-breast cancer diagnosis were evaluated for the association between alcohol intake and breast cancer recurrence and death.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

The women, who were generally light drinkers, were followed for an average of 7.4 years. The study reported an increase in risk of breast cancer [recurrence](#) and breast cancer death, but no effect on total mortality, to be associated with consumption of 3 to 4 or more drinks per week when compared with women not drinking following their cancer diagnosis.

Previous research has been mixed on this topic. Almost all large studies have shown no increase in all-cause mortality for women who drink moderately following a diagnosis of breast cancer (as does this study). As for recurrence of breast cancer, most have shown no increase in risk, although one previous study of [women](#) with estrogen-receptor + tumors found an increased risk of a primary cancer developing in the contralateral breast to be associated with alcohol intake of more than 7 drinks per week.

Because of conflicting results among studies on this topic, further research will be needed to determine the extent to which [alcohol](#) following a diagnosis of [breast cancer](#) may relate to subsequent disease and death.

More information: Kwan ML, Kushi LH, Weltzien E, Tam EK, Castillo A, Sweeney C, Caan BJ. Alcohol Consumption and Breast Cancer Recurrence and Survival Among Women With Early-Stage Breast Cancer: The Life After Cancer Epidemiology Study. *J Clin Oncol* 2010;28. Published ahead of print, [DOI:10.1200/JCO.2010.29.2730](https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2010.29.2730)

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