

The Pennington Biomedical Research Center is a world-renowned nutrition research center.

**Mission:**

To promote healthier lives through research and education in nutrition and preventive medicine.

The Pennington Center has several research areas, including:

Clinical Obesity Research

Experimental Obesity

Functional Foods

Health and Performance Enhancement

Nutrition and Chronic Diseases

Nutrition and the Brain

Dementia, Alzheimer's and healthy aging

Diet, exercise, weight loss and weight loss maintenance

The research fostered in these areas can have a profound impact on healthy living and on the prevention of common chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and osteoporosis.

The Division of Education provides education and information to the scientific community and the public about research findings, training programs and research areas, and coordinates educational events for the public on various health issues.

We invite people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the exciting research studies being conducted at the Pennington Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. If you would like to take part, visit the clinical trials web page at [www.pbrc.edu](http://www.pbrc.edu) or call (225) 763-3000.

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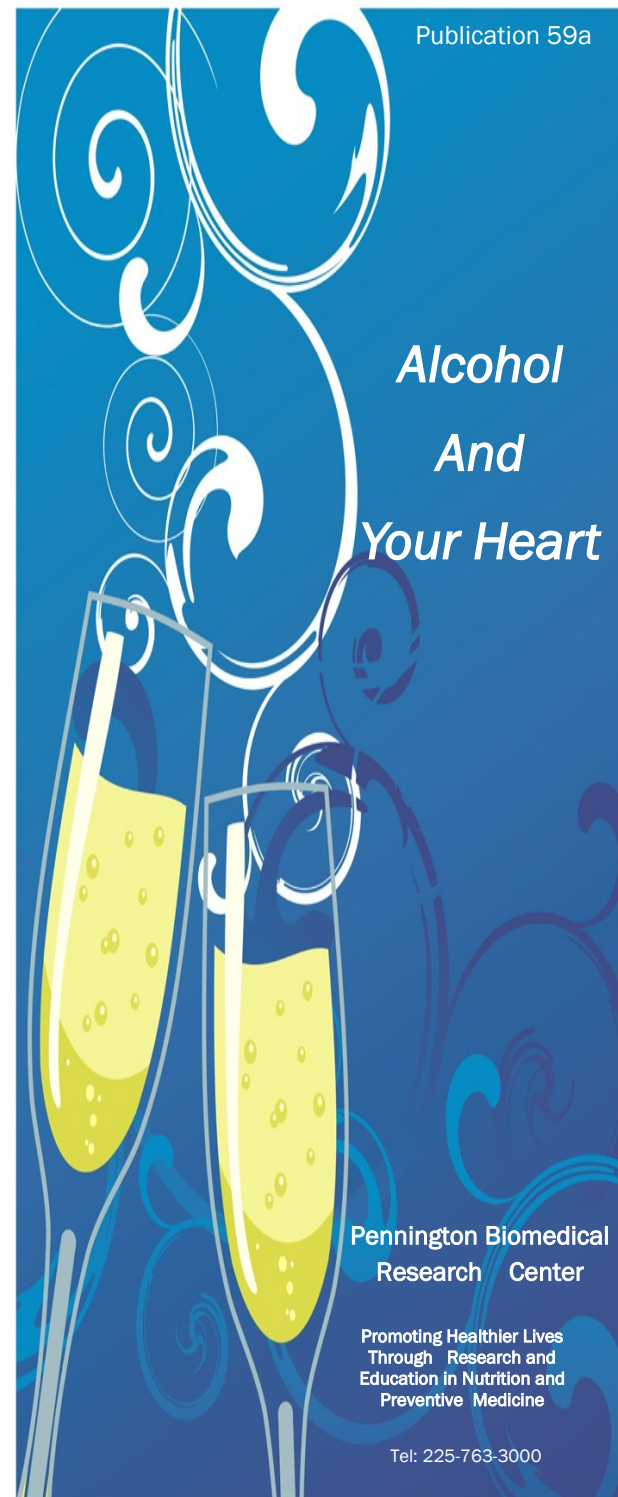


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Publication 59a

***Alcohol  
And  
Your Heart***



**Pennington Biomedical  
Research Center**

Promoting Healthier Lives  
Through Research and  
Education in Nutrition and  
Preventive Medicine

Tel: 225-763-3000



- One alcoholic drink is defined as: 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of spirits.
- Having 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks per days is associated with a decrease in heart attack risk.
- Moderate consumption of alcohol leads to a lower rate of obesity.
- Men who drank two drinks per day were 50% less likely to die of any cause over a period of 10 years, when compared to those who drank alcohol once per week or less.
- Women who drank alcohol about 1 to 6 drinks per week or less were 28% less likely to die of any cause than those who drank alcohol less frequently.
- The best known effect of alcohol is a small increase in HDL cholesterol; however, regular physical activity is another way to raise HDL levels.
- Alcohol may protect against heart attacks by inhibiting the constriction of the coronary arteries, limiting clot formation, and decreasing levels of homocysteine; which is an amino acid commonly linked to an increase in heart attack risk..
- Alcohol or substances such as resveratrol, which is commonly found in red wine, may prevent platelets in the blood from sticking to one another. This may reduce clot formation, thus decreasing the risk of a heart attack.
- More than one drink a day for women increases the risk of breast cancer.

- Women metabolize alcohol differently than men. One alcoholic beverage for a woman has the same effect as 2 alcoholic beverages for a man.
- The older that you are, the less efficiently your body will metabolize alcohol.
- Large consumption of alcohol raises triglyceride levels and leads to high blood pressure, heart failure, and increased caloric intake.
- Excessive alcohol intake is linked to the weakening of heart muscle, hemorrhagic stroke, cirrhosis of the liver, pancreatitis, trauma, certain cancers, suicide, and homicide. It may also lead to high blood pressure.
- Drinking more than three drinks per day has a direct toxic effect on the heart.
- Binge drinking places you at risk for obtaining an abnormal heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation.
- Alcohol contributes to hepatitis, cirrhosis, malnutrition, pancreatitis, stomach ulcers, fetal alcohol syndrome, and heart disease.
- Long term alcohol abuse destroys the cerebellum of the brain, causing irreversible brain damage, impaired function, unsteady walk, and slurred speech.
- Drinking high levels of alcohol increases the risk for alcoholism, high blood pressure, obesity, stroke, breast cancer, suicide and accidents.
- People who take aspirin regularly should not drink alcohol due to a combined negative effect on blood coagulation.
- Those who are at the greatest risk for

becoming alcoholics are those who tolerate alcohol well.

Alcohol consumption can have detrimental effects and even a moderate intake can lead to serious side in effects in certain individuals. People should not consume alcohol if you have the following:

1. Those with a personal or strong family history of alcoholism
2. People with uncontrolled high blood pressure.
3. People with high blood triglyceride levels.
4. People who have pancreatitis.
5. People who have liver disease.
6. People who have porphyria.
7. People who have heart failure.
8. People who are pregnant.
9. People who are currently taking medications that can have adverse reactions with alcohol.

Do not mix alcohol and medications, either over the counter or prescription. Alcohol is a depressant that slows down brain activity and reduces inhibitions. Some medications cause you to become sleepy, drowsy, or lightheaded. Drinking alcohol while taking medicines can intensify these effects. Alcohol can reduce the effectiveness of some medications, and it can combine with other medications to cause or increase side effects.

The American Heart Association recommends lifestyle changes for preventing heart disease, including: consuming a healthy diet, exercising and controlling blood cholesterol levels, weight management, and management of blood pressure.

