

Press Release

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition- New Study Finds Health Risks from Alcohol Starts One Drink Daily**

A recent government alcohol study entitled The Alcohol Intake and Health Study published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs concluded that the health risks of alcohol start at a single drink a day and that that even light drinking increases the risk of premature death.

The study was one of two reports commissioned during the Biden administration to inform an update to the U.S. dietary guidelines with the purpose of estimating the lifetime risk of alcohol-attributable mortality and morbidity in the United States based on a person's average lifetime weekly alcohol consumption to assess the impact of per-occasion alcohol consumption on health.

For people who have one drink a day on average, the researchers found, there was an increased risk of premature death from an illness or injury directly attributable to alcohol, though it was small — one in 1,000 people. But the risk of premature death jumped to one in 25 for those who had two drinks a day, a level long considered safe for men,

The second report, from a panel appointed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, or NASEM, came to very different conclusions. It suggested that moderate drinking (up to two drinks a day for men and one for women) was healthier than not drinking at all, although it noted that moderate drinking was also linked to a higher breast cancer risk. Some of the panelists behind that report had financial ties to the alcohol industry.

The report was found controversial after drawing the ire of the alcohol industry who criticized the research. The second report's finding was more palatable to the alcohol industry, which had called the Alcohol Intake and Health Study ideologically driven and scientifically flawed, and said it had communicated its concerns repeatedly to government officials over a period of several years.

When the Trump administration finally issued the new dietary guidelines in January, they advised Americans to drink less for better health but omitted any recommendation for daily limits, in a departure from previous years. "The new dietary guidelines say that consuming less is better for your health, but don't say what consuming less means," said Priscilla Martinez-Matyszczyk, one of the authors of the new paper and the deputy scientific director of the alcohol research group at the nonprofit Public Health Institute. "This paper does, and it says that having no more than one drink a day is best for health, and that drinking above that comes with significant risks."

A standard drink is defined as 12 fluid ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.

The new study, which relied exclusively on U.S. health data, assessed relationships between average alcohol consumption and the risk of disease or death from causes that were directly attributed to drinking.

Women who had one drink a day were more likely to die of liver cancer or breast cancer than women who did not drink. And at one drink a day, both men and women were at increased risk of dying from liver cirrhosis, oral and esophageal cancers and injuries, the paper found. The risks continued to climb with higher levels of consumption.

Consuming more than one drink per occasion was associated with progressively higher risks of breast cancer, cardiovascular disease and injury. The report did find that one drink a day was associated with a lower risk of diabetes for women and a lowered risk of stroke for both men and women. However, occasional heavy drinking nullified the protective effects against stroke.

One reason the studies reached such different conclusions is that while the new study examined deaths from causes directly attributable to alcohol, the NASEM report commissioned by Congress looked at overall death rates of moderate drinkers, including deaths not causally related to alcohol.

Critics of the NASEM report say that people who drink in moderation often have other healthy lifestyle habits that contribute to their longevity. The moderate drinking group also included many people who consumed less than two drinks a day. Both factors could make the health effects of moderate drinking look less significant than they might be.

Alcohol research is complex and different methods produce different results and modeling studies like the Alcohol Intake and Health Study, which use data to estimate the lifetime risk of diseases and deaths caused by alcohol, also come with potential biases.

The Alcohol Intake and Health Study researchers concluded that alcohol consumption, including at what may be perceived as “moderate” levels, is associated with increased mortality and morbidity risks and maintain the results support tightening alcohol use guidance in the United States, for both males and females, to no more than 1 drink per day.

The study’s public health significance statement: The Alcohol Intake and Health Study show that for Americans, even what is socially considered “moderate drinking” increases the risk of dying or developing health problems, helping people better understand the net health impact of alcohol. Furthermore, by identifying the levels of alcohol use that raise the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and injury, these findings can guide individuals, families, and communities in making safer choices about drinking patterns. The results also support changing the U.S. Dietary Guidelines on alcohol to recommend that current adult drinkers consume 1 drink or less in a day.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one’s health and wellness. The Glen

Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors, monitor hot spots where youth are known to drink and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Glen Cove Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).