

Health Matters

Women and Wine: Let's Look at the Facts

Women face a number of health issues as they age. Worrying about getting enough exercise, eating the right foods, hormonal fluctuations and the stress of managing day to day life can be exhausting. Unwinding with a glass (or two) of wine may be a welcoming end to the day.

As more women work outside the home, the wine-culture has become more celebrated. Books like "Sippy Cups Are Not for Chardonnay" and websites such as "Moms Who Need Wine," a Boston-based group that has more than half-million members, allow women to share their enthusiasm for the wine-as-reward culture (The Boston Globe, May 15, 2013).

Drinking wine with friends can be relaxing and fun. Women just need to consider the facts about alcohol to make informed decisions about how much and when to drink. When out at a bar or restaurant, it can be harder to know how much you have had to drink as the size of the glass (6 oz., 10 oz., or 20 oz.) and "topping off the glass" add to the total.

Women need to consider how much they have had to eat; having some food in the stomach will slow down the absorption of alcohol. Remember to drink water to pace yourself and avoid dehydration.

Binge drinking, defined for women as consuming 4 or more alcohol drinks on an occasion, can be a serious health problem. It results in about 23,000 deaths in women and girls each year. Binge drinking increases the chances of breast cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion).

In a culture where women are trying to do it all and be everything to everyone, the stress of managing everything can lead to drinking for escapism. Women are particularly at risk for this as they are vulnerable to a new area of marketing and promotion of alcoholic beverages. Being aware of the dangers and understanding the facts can empower women to make informed decisions about when and where to drink.

For more information on alcohol and health, contact NIH, NIAAA at www.niaa.nih.gov

Prevention Begins With You

If you have additional questions about the topic please call the Needham Health Department at 781-455-7500 ext. 511 or visit our web site at www.needhamma.gov.