Is There a Link Between Osteoarthritis and Alcohol Consumption?

by BRENDA VANTA

Can I Drink Alcohol With OA?

Do you enjoy a glass of wine once in a while? Wondering if it affects your osteoarthritis?

You can certainly have that occasional glass of wine over dinner. However, if you have OA it's best to drink in moderation, as the effects of alcohol on OA patients are still under research in the scientific word.

Let's review what has been discovered so far about osteoarthritis and alcohol.

The Research

A 2015 study featured in Arthritis Research & Therapy evaluated over 3000 participants. The result of this study: increased beer consumption was linked with an increased risk of OA of the knee and hip. In contrast, consumption of wine was associated with a decreased likelihood of knee OA.

Previous studies yielded mixed results – for example one cohort study conducted in Finland found no significant association between alcohol intake and OA of the hip, although the researchers followed the subjects for two decades.

Similarly, a US study that involved over 500 women also reported no significant link between osteoarthritis and alcohol.

A study conducted in Japan in patients newly diagnosed with OA of the knee showed that alcohol intake was associated with less disability. On the other hand, a study from Greece found alcohol related to back pain and OA.

Yet another, done in 2005, found that red wine may be the secret to repairing joint damage caused by OA because it contains resveratrol. This key ingredient found in red wine has strong antioxidant qualities, can halt the damage of the cartilage and speed up the recovery process.

Mediterranean diet is considered one of the healthiest diets on the planet, and is also one of the most well researched. According to the principles of this diet, it is ok to have a glass of wine with your dinner, and the diet appears to have anti-inflammatory qualities and reduce the joint inflammation, protect the heart, help prevent various cancers and more. It is based on fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and fish, healthy oils, nuts and seeds.

Tips for Safe Consumption of Alcohol

If you choose to consume alcohol, consider the following tips:

- **Choose red wine** – If you choose to have a drink, it's better to have a glass of red wine than a beer. Many scientists believe that alcohol itself is not necessarily the factor that influences the risk of OA, but rather other chemical contained in beer or wine may affect the OA joints.
- **Drink in moderation**– Everyone agrees that the dose of alcohol ingested is very important. Drinking "in moderation" means a maximum of 14 drinks for men and seven for women per week. While it is fine to drink alcohol in moderation, excessive drinking always has a negative impact – not just on your joints, but also your heart, liver, bones, brain and overall your whole body.
- **Be mindful of medications** – Another thing you should consider is the interaction between alcohol and medication. Many drugs (including those for OA) can interfere with alcohol, and possibly cause serious problems. Make sure you talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see if it is safe to drink alcohol while taking your medication.