



# The Best Drinks for Osteoarthritis

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## How Certain Beverages Impact Your Risk of Developing Osteoarthritis

Researchers in the UK (Muthuri, 2015) recently published a high quality report documenting their investigation into the role of beverages and the development of osteoarthritis.

The people in the study ranged in age from their mid-40s to mid-80s. Participants in the study were divided into two groups. One group consisted of people who had severe osteoarthritis of the knee or hip. People in the second group had no osteoarthritis symptoms or changes in their joints seen on X-ray.

The participants were provided with a questionnaire to document their beverage consumption when they were 21–50 years of age. Researchers took measures to ensure that other factors, such as diet, did not impact the results of the study.

The investigators determined that osteoarthritis and coffee were not linked as juice and caffeinated did not impact its development. They determined that wine may have a protective effect on the joints, while beer increased the risk of osteoarthritis occurring. Hard spirits, such as vodka, and whiskey, reduced development of osteoarthritis of the hip. The effects of the beverages was related to quantities consumed.

### Can Wine Protect Your Joints?

Wine drinking may reduce the development of knee arthritis via several mechanisms. Recent evidence indicates that moderate wine consumption helps healthy intestinal flora to flourish, while it inhibits the growth of harmful microorganisms.

The healthy microorganisms prevent osteoarthritis development by reducing the likelihood of unhealthy changes occurring within the intestinal walls. Maintaining healthy intestinal walls reduces the likelihood of inflammation. Reduced inflammation benefits the joints, as well as all of the tissues of the body.

The researchers noted other studies that linked an imbalance of microorganisms within the digestive tract to obesity. Obesity is a known risk factor for osteoarthritis occurrence.

### How Beer Increases Osteoarthritis Risk

Beer drinking increases the risk of osteoarthritis of the knees and hips. Researchers do not know exactly why beer drinking increases the risk of osteoarthritis occurring; however they offer some ideas about factors which may be involved.

Beer intake is associated with elevated levels of uric acid in the bloodstream. Uric acid causes painful crystals to form when gout is present. The researchers proposed that the elevated levels of uric acid may be involved in osteoarthritis development too. Beer is also rich in purines, a known risk factor for gout.

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Additionally, having a “beer belly” puts stress on the hip and knee joints. This, in combination with increased weight, may lead to an elevated risk of osteoarthritis associated with beer consumption.

If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, opt for red wine for osteoarthritis. Red wine offers cardio protective benefits in addition to bone preserving ones. Keep in mind that this research study evaluated the participants’ lifetime use of beverages. If you choose to drink alcohol, consume it in small quantities.

### **Spearmint Tea Can Reduce Symptoms**

A clinical trial conducted by researchers from a Canadian university (Connelly, 2014) found that drinking spearmint tea reduced discomfort and levels of debility among people who had a diagnosis of osteoarthritis in the knee.

Two groups of participants drank spearmint tea twice daily for 16 weeks. One tea contained high amounts of a natural substance called rosmarinic acid. A significant reduction in pain occurred among participants who drank the tea which was high in rosmarinic acid. It did not occur in the people who drank the regular, commercially available, spearmint tea, however both groups experienced less stiffness and disability. Quality of life improved for the group which consumed the rosmarinic rich tea.

Rosmarinic acid is found within many herbs. It is found in basil, holy basil, lemon balm, peppermint, thyme, marjoram, rosemary and sage. Include a wide array of these tasty herbs in your diet and reap the healing effects they offer.

In addition to improving symptoms of osteoarthritis, your digestive health may improve. These herbs add variety and flavor to your diet. They are rich in antioxidants which fight cancer and aging.