

**DRINKING ALCOHOL (MADYA): A BOON OR A BANE? - A REVIEW ARTICLE****[Drashti Bharat Vaja](#)¹, [Rajesh Kolarkar](#)²**

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Article Received: 15/01/2022 - **Peer Reviewed:** 10/02/2022 - **Accepted for Publication:** 11/02/2022**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda is considered the "Science of Life". Ayurveda knowledge was invented in India and is also called as "mother of healing". The main aim of Ayurveda is "*swasthasya swasthaya rakshanam*" which means to maintain the health of a healthy person and "*Aturasya Vikara Prashmanam Cha*" which means cure the disease of the diseased person. Food (*ahara*) and lifestyle (*vihar*) have a direct relationship with one's health and diseases are the result of modern lifestyle modifications. In order to stay healthy and fit one should consume the right food to prevent diseases. An alcoholic drink is a drink that contains ethanol, a type of alcohol produced by fermentation of grains, fruits, or other sources of sugar that acts as a drug.¹ Alcohol is a depressant, which in low doses causes euphoria, reduces anxiety, and increases sociability. In higher doses, it causes drunkenness, unconsciousness or death. Long-term use can lead to an alcohol use disorder, an increased risk of developing several types of cancer, and physical dependence².

Keywords: Wine, Health, Alcohol, *Aasava Aarishta*, *Madhatya*, *Madya*

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol can cause mental disorders which can take control over a person not just physically but mentally as well. There are few types of alcohol if taken in small quantities can be good for health, but if consumed in larger quantities can cause various health hazards including body and mind. Taking larger quantities can directly alter the Brain and lower its activities. Short term consumption of alcohol can cause- road accidents, fall, drowning, burns, violence, including homicide, suicide, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, alcohol poisoning, risky sexual behaviour, etc.³ Long term consumption of alcohol can bring along many diseases such as Liver damage, heart diseases, high blood pressure, stroke, digestive problems, cancer, weakening of immune system, increase chance of getting sick, memory problems, mental health issues like depression, anxiety, social problems, family related problems, job-related problems, etc.⁴ Worldwide, 3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol, this represents 5.3 % of all deaths.

Definition of Madya:

The disease produced due to improper use of Madya is called Madatyaya. The one which causes Mada by ingestion is called Madya. Mada means any exhilarating or intoxicating condition

बुद्धिं लुम्पति यिद्रव्यं मदकारी िदच्युयि।
मोिगुणप्रधानिं च यथा मद्यिं सुराददकम॥ शा. सिं.पू. खिं.
४/२१-२२⁴

Madya is prepared from different types of ingredients, accordingly, they have different Guna and Karma, but all are intoxicating. (5) Charaka and Vagbhata say that Madya has ten Gunas, but Sushruta says only eight Gunas except for Laghu and Amla. Commenting on the Guna of Visha, Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata say that the Gunas of Madya are just opposite to the Gunas of Oja. Madya (wines, all alcoholic beverages generally) in general, stimulate digestion, help the taste, penetrate deep, hot in potency, give satisfaction (mental) and nourishment (to the body) slightly sweet, Litter and pungent in taste, sour at the end of digestion, laxative, slightly astringent, confer good voice, health, intelligence, colour and complexion; easily digestible, beneficial to those having loss of

sleep or excess sleep for both lean and stout persons; is non-viscid, capable of entering through minute pores and cleansing them, mitigate vata and kapha, all these if used judiciously; but used otherwise, they act like poison. Fresh ones are hard to digest; make for an increase of all the dosās, whereas old ones are opposite of this; they should not be used hot or with hot comforts, not by persons who are having purgation (or had purgative therapy) and who are hungry; wines which are very strong or very weak, which are very clear (like water) or very turbid and those which are spoilt, should not be used for drinking.

The term 'Madya' refers to all types of alcoholic beverages in general, the practice of preparing and drinking alcoholic beverages is very ancient in our country going as far back as the times of Rig-Veda (3000 B. C.). Drinking many kinds of alcohol, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups and assemblies was very common then, and still is even today. Alcoholic beverages produce exhilaration and a sort of mental exuberance. Hence their popularity, and also as a tonic for health, But the good effects are slight compared to the quantity required to produce them. So, people go on increasing the quantity of the drinking day after day and finally become addicted to it, so great, that it is impossible to be without it even for a few hours.

Large quantities of such drinks produce many abnormalities in the various organs and their functions and cause incurable diseases and even death. Having understood this, ancient scholars prescribed many rules and regimens for taking alcoholic drinks to protect the health, such as, that it should be little, to be taken after food and not on empty stomach, taken in the company of good friends and not alone, and many others. Followed strictly, these will avoid much of the bad effects of such drinks. Judicious use of alcoholic drinks is somewhat good for the body and mind, but its injudicious use is injurious just like poison.

What does Ayurveda say about Alcohol-?

According to Ayurvedic texts, alcohol is considered both a stimulant as well as a dangerous tonic that can take control over the whole body as well as mind. In

Charak Samhita, few guidelines were given for the one who wishes to drink alcohol.

Guidelines include-

-it's important to know the body type i.e Vata, Pitta and Kapha

[Eg- one with vata body type is suggested to do Taila-bhangya, Udhvartana and then take a hot water bath, take some amount of sunlight, etc. One with a pitta body type should take cold water baths, madhur and snigdha aahar, etc. And one with kapha body type should do ushna abhyanga, bath and should consume food made up of Java and wheat, etc.⁶ Being mentally and physically capable -Following seasonal food diet, When and what food to be taken along with Alcohol Proper manner of alcohol consumption.⁷ According to Ayurveda, if consumed in smaller quantities can help in healthy digestion, heart diseases, relieving stress and good sleep but if the quantities increase it has a number of health hazards. There are a few Ayurvedic medicines that include alcohol content in it eg. Arishta. The first known mention of grape-based wines in India is from the late 4th-century BC writings

of Chanakya, the chief minister of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. In his writings, Chanakya condemns the use of alcohol while chronicling the emperor and his court's frequent indulgence of a style of wine known as madhu.⁸ Madya taken in optimum quantity, in combination with cooked meat and boiled rice, or any other articles of food profusely saturated with sneha adds to the longevity, muscular strength and corpulence of a person. When taken properly, it exhilarates the state of mind accompanied with beauty, fortitude, vigour and valour. When a foolish person takes it without taking food or on an empty stomach and an inordinate quantity, the fiery liquid Madya, in combination with the Teekshna Jatharagni, produces the symptoms of Mada.⁹

Wine is made in many ways from different fruits, with grapes being the most common.

From grapes

The type of grape used, and the amount of skin contact while the juice is being extracted determines the color and general style of the wine. The color has no relation to a wine's sweetness—all may be made sweet or dry. (10)

	Long contact with grape skins	Short contact with grape skins	No contact with grape skins
Red grapes	red wine	rosé wine	white wine
White grapes	orange wine		

Red - Red wine gains its color and flavour from the grape skin, by allowing the grapes to soak in the extracted juice. Red wine is made from dark-colored red grape varieties.¹⁰ **White** - To make white wine, grapes are pressed quickly with the juice immediately drained away from the grape skins. The grapes used are typically white grape varieties, though red grapes may be used if the wine-maker is careful not to let the skin stain the wort during the separation of the pulp-juice.¹⁰ **Rose** - A rose wine gains color from red grape skins, but not enough to qualify it as red wine. It may be the oldest known type of wine, as it is the most straightforward to make with the skin contact method. There are three primary ways to produce rosé wine: Skin contact (allowing dark grape skins to stain the wort),

saignée (removing juice from the must early in fermentation and continuing fermentation of the juice separately) and blending of red and white wine (uncommon and discouraged in most wine growing regions). Rose wines are made from a wide variety of grapes all over the world.¹⁰ **Orange** - Sometimes called amber wines, these are wines made with white grapes but with the skins allowed to soak during pressing, similar to red and rose wine production. They are notably tannic and usually made dry. (10)

From other fruits and foods

Fruit - Wines from other fruits, such as apples and berries, are usually named after the fruit from which they are produced and combined with the word "wine"

(for example, apple wine and elderberry wine) and are generically called fruit wine or country wine.

Honey - Mead, also called honey wine, is created by fermenting honey with water, sometimes with various fruits, spices, grains.

Starch - Other drinks called "wine", such as barley wine and rice wine are made from starch-based materials and resemble beer more than traditional wine, while ginger wine is fortified with brandy.

Potential benefits of drinking wine.

- Some research suggests that drinking wine in moderation provides antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits that may improve your gut bacteria and boost

your heart health, mental health, and longevity. However, most research has focused on red wine. Red wine likely provides more health benefits than white wine. However, more research is needed, particularly on white wine.

While moderate wine consumption may have health benefits, excessive alcohol intake can have negative health outcomes. Certain individuals and populations should abstain from drinking alcohol. (11)

Nutrition Comparison (11)

Red and white wine have very similar nutrition profiles. However, looking at the nutrient content per 5-ounce (148-ml) glass, you can see that there are some differences.

	Red wine	White wine
Calories	125	121
Carbs	4 grams	4 grams
Sugars	1 gram	1 gram
Manganese	10% of the RDI	9% of the RDI
Potassium	5% of the RDI	3% of the RDI
Magnesium	4% of the RDI	4% of the RDI
Vitamin B6	4% of the RDI	4% of the RDI
Iron	4% of the RDI	2% of the RDI
Riboflavin	3% of the RDI	1% of the RDI
Phosphorus	3% of the RDI	3% of the RDI
Niacin	2% of the RDI	1% of the RDI
Calcium, vitamin K, zinc	1% of the RDI	1% of the RDI

Red wine has been linked to a variety of health benefits. It's thought to reduce the risk of heart disease, raise HDL cholesterol and slow age-related mental decline. (11)

In Ayurveda, the biological characteristics of a human body are defined by 'doshas'—vata, pitta and kapha. Hence, no two bodies are the same. Types of food and drink may affect the functional units (doshas) of the body, which can lead to serious health issues. Dry wine generally increases vayu and pitta, hence those who are of this constitution must avoid it. Instead, go for a sweet wine or should pair it with fruits, as it will decrease the negative effects to some extent. Sweet wine may increase kapha, so kapha constituents should avoid it; they should take dry wine or pair the wine with roasted chickpeas/pulses to nullify the effect of sweet wine," recommends Dr. Nitin Rajan Kochar

M.D. and Ayurved. Wine has some health benefits, but it should be avoided in summer and hot climatic conditions. "Avoid oily food and curd while drinking wine," advises Dr. Nitin Rajan Kochar M.D. and Ayurved. Women absorb more alcohol compared to men, as they have lesser water content in their bodies. A glass of wine for women and two glasses of wine for men wouldn't harm anybody after a long day at work. As Fashion Designer Narendra Kumar quips, "Wine is good for the mind and body. (12)

What is moderate wine consumption?

"Moderate" wine consumption is said to be good for your health. But what is "moderate" wine consumption? How much wine you can drink in one sitting before the health benefits turn into dangers depends on many factors, including the person's size, age, sex, body stature and general state of health, as well as

whether it is being consumed with food or on an empty stomach. Women absorb alcohol more rapidly than men because of their lower body water content and different levels of stomach enzymes. Therefore, moderate wine consumption will be a lower amount for women than for men. A medium glass of wine is equivalent to about 2 units of alcohol. According to “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010”⁴, published by the US Department of Agriculture, “If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation – up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men”.

(13)

What are the possible health benefits of drinking wine? (13)

1. Reducing the risk of depression
2. Preventing colon cancer
3. Anti-ageing
4. Preventing breast cancer
5. Preventing dementia
6. Protecting from severe sunburn
7. Preventing blinding diseases
8. Damage after stroke
9. Improving lung function and preventing lung cancer
10. Raising levels of omega-3 fatty acids
11. Preventing liver disease
12. Protecting from prostate Cancer
13. Preventing type 2 diabetes

What is resveratrol?

Resveratrol is a compound found in some plants. Plants produce resveratrol to fight off bacteria and fungi. Resveratrol also protects plants from ultraviolet irradiation. Red wine contains more resveratrol than white wine because it is fermented with the skins (white wine is not). Most of the resveratrol in grapes is in the seeds and skin. (13)

Caution with wine drinking-

1. Depression
2. Mental health problems
3. Cardiomyopathy
4. Arrhythmias
5. Stroke
6. Hypertension
7. Fatty liver

8. Alcoholic hepatitis
9. Cirrhosis
10. Several cancers
11. Pancreatitis
12. As well as many other chronic diseases.¹³

DISCUSSION

As seen above, according to Ayurveda alcohol has both the qualities, i.e., tonic as well as dangerous tonic. As the qualities of alcohol are exactly opposite to that of ojas it is best avoided. Alcohol consumption leads to various short term and long-term diseases. Alcohol use can be associated with various mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, suicide, personality disorders, etc. Which are serious problems nowadays. It can also lead to Krodha, lobha, Moha etc. Alcohol drinking can lead to memory loss poisoning cancer to death. Various studies have also proven to drink alcohol hazardous to human life. But as seen above along with hazardous effects, red wine comes with few benefits including, if taken in moderation, providing antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits that may improve your gut bacteria and boost your heart health, mental health, and longevity. No medical institution will encourage non-drinkers to drink wine just because the grape skin or grape seeds have antioxidants that can restore health. But for drinkers' wine can be suggested than other drinks available.

CONCLUSION

Alcohol is best avoided. As we have seen, alcohol has both good and bad effects. Of which especially considering wine it has seen to have various benefits if taken in lesser amounts (moderate quantity). As of the study, it is seen that wine has few health benefits compared to other alcoholic drinks available so one can consume wine in moderate quantities and avail of its benefits. One should study both its uses and disadvantages and choose better for themselves. It is important to study the properties of wine to know its action on the body. The properties of Wines are studied and their action on the body is explained. The properties of wine can be utilized in medicine to improve and enhance its action at the same time the ill effects of the

wine can be reduced. They can be used as medicine and their unwanted effects can be nullified by using opposite properties. Properties of a substance decide how it is going to affect the body. One should follow the Ayurvedic regime of daily practice and live a better healthy life.

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