

Why Wine Is Good for Your Health

If you have a glass of wine and watch sunset at the beach with friends or neighbors, it turns out you are doing something terrific for your health.

People who live the longest, healthiest lives, as studied by the Blue Zones Project, tend to drink a glass of wine or two a day. This is known as “Wine @ 5,” and it’s one of the Blue Zones Power 9 principles.

What’s so healthy about wine? Well, according to Deb Logan, executive director of the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida, “Wine is rich in polyphenols, which are antioxidants. They give fruits and vegetables their bright colors.”

It follows then that red wine is slightly healthier than white, because the red grape has more antioxidants than white. But if you don’t care for red, feel free to substitute white. And if you don’t drink alcohol, never fear: You can still get the health benefits of polyphenols from other plant-based foods, dark chocolate and green tea among them.

An important element of the Wine @ 5 recommendation is to gather with friends to imbibe. Fellowship and good company are as important as the

wine’s nutritional benefits. Obviously, you don’t have to have your wine and fellowship right at 5 p.m., but the principle is named as such to keep in mind



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that the occasion should take place at the end of the workday and with a meal or a snack. It would be equally healthful to have a glass of iced tea and a snack with a friend at the end of the

day when you can relax.

Some people prefer not to drink alcohol, and, of course, no one under drinking age should be partaking. If you do choose to drink, remember to keep it in moderation. Women should have just one glass a day and men, two. “Glasses at restaurants are getting bigger,” Logan says. A serving of wine is 5 ounces, but restaurant servings are often 9 or even 12 ounces. So, educate yourself about what 5 ounces looks like, and keep your servings to that size. Overdoing it can increase your risk of illness and accidents.

You may have heard about Cannonau wine from Sardinia (one of the areas in the world where people live the longest, healthiest lives), which has a high level of polyphenols. Although Cannonau is available locally, “You don’t have to go out of your way to get that type,” Logan says.

And, she adds, “although the recommendation is to have wine daily, don’t feel that you have to drink it every day.” The Wine @ 5 recommendation is simply an acknowledgement that wine has health benefits when used in a healthful and moderate way. **NH**