

# It's Official : Beer is good for you

Two separate studies in Holland and the UK have shown that drinking beer can actually be



beneficial to your health. Apparently, the best strategy is to drink up to a litre of beer a day. Many previous studies have shown a link between alcohol consumption and reduced levels

of coronary heart disease, and it's commonly thought that red wine is good for the digestion.

In the recent study, Dr Henk Hendriks with colleagues from the TNO Nutrition and Food Research Institute, studied 111 healthy men who each drank beer, red wine, spirits, and water, for three weeks, with dinner. They found that homocysteine levels did not increase after beer consumption, but rose after drinking wine and spirits. Beer drinkers had a 30% increase of vitamin B6 in blood plasma. Levels of B6 also rose in people who had drunk wine and spirits, although not by the same amount. Dr Hendriks' team suggests that beer may contain other ingredients that help protect against heart disease. He also stated that "Moderate alcohol consumption affects many processes in the body, one of which is the significant increase in HDL cholesterol - the good cholesterol.

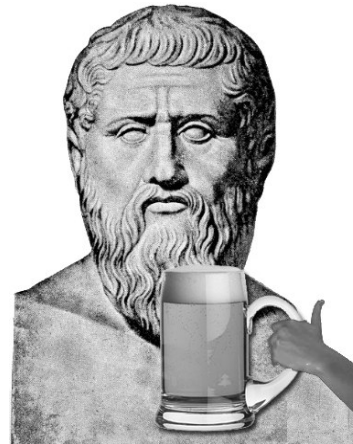
In another study, Dr Martin

Bobak and colleagues from the International Centre for Health and Society, University College, London, examined whether beer could protect against heart disease in the Czech Republic - a country where beer is almost universally the drink of choice. They compared men who had suffered heart attacks with healthy men of the same age. They found that the best way to protect against heart disease was to drink beer daily, or almost daily, but to limit consumption to between half a litre and one litre a day. Men who drank twice a day or more were less likely to be protected from heart disease. Bobak concluded that "The results suggest that the protective effect is due to alcohol itself; the myth about special qualities of wine is, in my view, wrong."

On the other side, Andrew Varley, of the Institute of Alcohol Studies, warned against people using the research as an excuse to drink more beer. He said: "Any research about the various health-giving properties of different types of alcohol is a bit of a red herring as the effect is usually marginal and restricted to a very small group of people under certain circumstances.

"There are damn sight better ways to protect against heart disease than by drinking beer, but people love this sort of thing because it gives them an excuse." Mr Varley said that drinking large quantities of beer would create far more health problems than it would solve. A spokesman for the British Heart Foundation said: "At the moment we should all stick to the known facts: one or two units of alcohol a day may have a protective affect on the heart but more than this could do more harm than good.

As the philosopher Plato said



a long time ago - "He was a wise man who invented beer."

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people have paid for the thrill.

## Tax Breaks for Drug Running

In Holland, a court recently ruled that a fisherman convicted of smuggling hashish could deduct the cost of buying and shipping the drug from his income on his tax return. The smuggler was originally issued with a 3.3 million euro fine, but appealed to the court. They ruled that because he had only been convicted of drug running and not trading in drugs he could deduct the cost of buying and transporting the drugs on his tax form. That cut his tax bill to 1.8 million euros - a saving of 1.5 million.

"We disagree with the local court, so we will go to the Supreme Court to appeal," said Tax Service spokesman Marcel Homan.

The case isn't the first time a court's ruling on taxes has raised Dutch eyebrows. In 2005, judges in the northern city of Leeuwarden ruled that witches can write off the cost of schooling in witchcraft against their tax bills if it increases the likelihood of employment and personal income.

## Parking Ticket Paid – After 26 years!

In Wisconsin, a \$1 parking ticket issued in 1980 was finally paid off, along with the \$3 late fee. The offender omitted to include their name, but Police Captain Mike Babe said, "It's kind of cool that someone took the time to take care of their obligation after 26 years. Maybe their conscience got to them."

*Ed – If my parking tickets were only a dollar, I'd be happy to pay them too!*

## A man meets a genie

A man meets a genie. The genie tells him he can have whatever he wants, provided that his mother-in-law gets double.

The man thinks for a moment and then says, "OK, give me a million dollars and beat me half to death."

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