

450 B.C. Hippocrates recommended wine to treat fever and to disinfect wounds. Ever since, wine has either been worshiped or condemned depending on the historical rhythm. Today's wine and particularly red wine has again been socially rehabilitated thanks to its antioxidant properties.

Polyphenols that inhibit the growth of bacteria and other human pathogens, B-carotene (provitamin A), vitamin C, vitamin E, lycopene and resveratrol which is one of the major anti-oxidising factors are kept in high esteem by the general public, by pharmaceutical companies as well as medical practitioners for their powerful mechanisms in treatment and prevention of cancerous, neurodegenerative (Alzheimer), metabolic and cardiovascular diseases.

Wine leaves are famous for high concentration of flavonoids. A lesser known fact is they also have a high content of mineral salts, potassium, calcium and organic acids such as malic, citric and others. Leaves infusions or patches have been traditionally used in the vine-growing areas of France as a local remedy for « heavy legs » and unsightly veins. Soaking legs in water saturated with leaves or directly applying patches daily for a 3 month period gives a visible effect. This is one example of many home secrets that are now used in pharmacology. Derivatives of *Vitis vinifera* are widely used in food complements, creams and gels to treat venous insufficiency, varicose veins and to reduce oedema. Draining cryo-gel by Ericson laboratories is yet another example of the wine leaves physiotherapeutic virtues which we apply during the Cryo-Thermy Body Treatment offered in Centre de Bien-Etre *Le Weekend*.

A minor note goes to the whites: substantially smaller quantity of such polyphenols as resveratrol and quercetin are found in the white wine. As for the strong alcoholic drinks – no studies have yet proven their role in preventive medicine. Maybe something for future discoveries at the request of vodka and martini aficionados. In Russia they recommend a maximum of 24 grams of « pure » strong alcohol per day for men which is an equivalent to 50-60 grams of vodka. For women the recommendation is 15 grams and correspondingly 30-40 grams of vodka. A cheerful note for beer lovers: a moderate (moderate!!!) beer intake can play a positive role in reducing the LDL, the « bad » cholesterol and increasing the HDL, the « good » cholesterol thanks to its principal ingredient – yeast.

Drinking wine and especially a good wine is an unbeaten pleasure. How much wine is good? In fact, there is no direct answer to this question. Italy and Spain consume about 120-140 litres of red per person per year! In France this figure is higher, but, of course, these are French wines! - 195 litres per person per year. The medical opinion directs us towards a maximum 200 ml of red wine per day for men and 100 ml per day for women. This is a maximum risk-free, and not a recommended intake. Which is, again a generalized approach? Our diet plays a significant factor when responding correctly to the wine consumption question. If we follow the Mediterranean diet, then a daily intake of a glass of red is what the doctor prescribes. But, if we take a tiny salad with a drop of olive oil, naming it a Mediterranean diet and afterwards order a good fat fried sausage accompanied with french fries, we are in very distant uncharted waters. Naomi Allen from the University of Oxford led the study on the alcohol factor in cancer risk increase for women. The study involved more

than 1.3 million women in Great Britain in the age group 50 to 64 years. The resulting outcome suggested that alcohol, rather than other substances contained in alcoholic beverages are the most important factor in determining cancer risk. According to Allen, even the moderate alcohol intake increases the risk of breast cancer. Sadly, that conclusion was attributed to red wine, as well.

And yet, if a good fête goes with a good bottle or two of good wine, good whisky, good beer and good vodka. If you feel you should have followed some guidelines on wine consumption, but you did not and the « day after » your head and stomach are in strong disagreement with you, then check the drugstore for Hepatodoron by Weleda (which also contains *Vitis vinifera*) or a capsule of Legalon 70 to detoxify the liver. By the way, the active ingredient of Legalon 70 is the thistle milk - Scots display this flower on their coat-of-arms, they must have discovered the remedy centuries before us. And a truly healthy alternative to help you survive the holiday period is kefir in Migros! Cheers!