



BEER AND HEALTH FACT SHEET

According to numerous independent studies, beer, when consumed in moderation, can be a part of a healthful diet. And it's not just "empty calories" -- beer provides vitamins, minerals and protein,¹ as well as antioxidants that may have positive health effects on the body.²⁻⁵

Vitamins and Minerals

Beer is made from malt, which contains B vitamins and minerals. A bottle of beer provides a contribution to the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for these vitamins, ranging from a few percent to one percent.

Antioxidants

Like wine, beer contains antioxidants. The flavonoids in beer come from barley and hops, whereas the flavonoids in wine come from grapes.

REGULAR BEER (12 oz)

Calories	146 calories
Protein	1 gram
Fat	0 grams
Carbo	13 grams
Fiber	<1 gram

Minerals:

Calcium	18 mg
Iron	<1 mg
Magnesium	21 mg
Phosphorus	43 mg
Potassium	89 mg
Sodium	18 mg

LIGHT BEER (12 oz)

Calories	99 calories
Protein	0.7 grams
Fat	0 grams
Carbo	5 grams
Fiber	0 grams

Minerals:

Calcium	18 mg
Iron	<1 mg
Magnesium	21 mg
Phosphorus	42 mg
Potassium	64 mg
Sodium	1 mg

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Vitamins:

Thiamin	0.0 mg
Riboflavin	0.1 mg
Niacin	1.6 mg
Pant. Acid	0.2 mg
Vitamin B-6	0.2 mg
Folate	21.4 mcg
Vitamin B-12	0.1 mcg

Vitamins:

Thiamin	0.0 mg
Riboflavin	0.1 mg
Niacin	1.4 mg
Pant. Acid	0.2 mg
Vitamin B-6	0.1 mg
Folate	14.2 mcg
Vitamin B-12	0.0 mcg

Source: USDA; Nutrient Database for Standard Reference

Potential Health Benefits of Beer

There's growing evidence that responsible consumption of beer or other alcohol beverages may *provide* potential health benefits. When consumed in moderation, beer may help protect against some of the nation's top killers, including heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes. It may also protect against age-related cognitive decline and dementia, as well as increase overall longevity, according to recent research.

Research shows that moderate alcohol intake may:

Reduce the risk of heart disease by mediating factors such as C-reactive protein, HDL, LDL and clotting factors.⁶⁻¹¹

Reduce the risk of ischemic stroke or heart attack by slowing blood clotting time.^{12,13,14}

Reduce the risk of insulin insensitivity and Type 2 diabetes.¹⁵⁻²²

Reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.²⁴⁻²⁵

Heart Health

It's not just wine that can help keep the heart healthy. Some studies suggest that people who drink one to two glasses of beer a day have a 30 to 40 percent lower rate of heart disease compared with non-drinkers.⁹ This association is reportedly present even after accounting for age, cigarette smoking, and many other lifestyle factors that can affect heart health, suggesting that even people with existing risk factors for heart disease may benefit from moderate consumption of beer.

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The reported association between moderate alcohol consumption and cardiovascular disease is not linear, but more “u-shaped.” Higher death rates from cardiovascular disease are found among those who abstain as well as those who drink in excess of six drinks per day, according to many studies.

Stroke and Hypertension

Although heavy beer and other alcohol consumption is associated with a higher risk of hemorrhagic and ischemic strokes, light to moderate consumption of beer and other alcohol beverages may be associated with a lower risk. Several observational studies suggest that responsible alcohol consumption may be associated with lower risk of ischemic stroke. Ischemic stroke represents approximately 80 percent of all strokes in western cultures. As with the potential benefits of beer on heart health, the available evidence suggests that moderate intakes of beer, wine, and spirits may all have similar benefits on stroke risk.

Studies show that risk for hypertension is predominantly found with heavier rates of consumption of alcohol. At a lower consumption, there is not documented risk for hypertension and, if anything, it may provide slight protection.¹³

Diabetes

An inverse association between moderate beer consumption and risk of impaired glucose tolerance and of Type 2 diabetes has been documented in many studies.¹⁵⁻²² Additional evidence suggests that moderate drinking among people with diabetes may reduce their risk of coronary heart disease, by far the biggest killer of people with diabetes.²³ In the past, the recommendations for patients with diabetes were to abstain from alcohol consumption. New studies suggest that those who drink moderately may have increased longevity.^{9,21,22}

Cognitive Function and Dementia

The potential effects of beer and other alcohol beverages on vascular functioning may reduce risk for cognitive decline and dementia.^{24,25} A recent case-control study of almost 6,000 subjects found that moderate alcohol consumption was associated with a lower risk of dementia among older adults.²⁴

Antioxidants and Cancer

Polyphenols, also known as tannins, are antioxidants present in beer and wine. Per drink, beer contains the same amount of polyphenols as red wine, and four to five times as many polyphenols as white wine. According to researchers, polyphenols isolated from hops may reduce the test tube growth of human cancer cells, and offer protection against DNA oxidative damage.^{2-4, 26}

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Weight Control

A recent study found that the term “beer belly” may be a misnomer. Researchers in Europe studied the association between beer intake and waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) and body mass index (BMI). They concluded that “it is unlikely that beer intake is associated with a largely increased WHR or BMI.”²⁷

Moderate beer consumption can, for many adults, be part of a successful weight control plan. The key is to remember that the calories contained in beer (and other foods) must be balanced with appropriate menu planning and physical activity.

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