

ALCOHOL – TOTAL ABSTINENCE

The false message of safety and even encouragement in moderate use of alcohol is being promoted throughout society at the present time and we need to be vigilant in understanding the real issues here. Doctor John Ashton, Strategic Research Manager of the Sanitarium Health Food Company and author of *UNCORKED* has this to say:

“In a recent report in 2006 the International Agency for Research on Cancer estimated that world wide, there were about 389,000 cases of cancer attributed to drinking alcohol each year resulting in around 233,000 deaths. Among women, breast cancer comprised 60% of alcohol-attributable cancers. The report authors warn that the burden of alcohol-associated cancer appears to be substantial and needs to be considered when making public health recommendations on alcohol drinking. (Boffetta P, Hashibe M, La Vecchia C, Zatonski W, Rehm J, 2006, . “**The burden of cancer attributable to alcohol drinking.**” Int J Cancer. 2006 Aug 15;119(4):pp884-7.)

The media promotes the studies that show that drinking wine or beer may help protect against heart disease. However after an extensive review of the research literature pertaining to alcohol and heart health, researchers at Heidelberg University, recently warned that a regular daily administration of alcohol should not be recommended and that educating the public that alcohol be used as a coronary therapeutic agent would create more damage than benefit. They concluded that any recommendation for alcohol to be used as protection against heart attack and ischemic stroke has the potential to cause damaging effects on various other organs. (Meier P. and Seitz HK, 2006, “Effects of alcohol. Besides its harmful health impact, are there any positive aspects of chronic alcohol consumption?” Med Klin (Munich), Nov 15;101(11):pp891-7.)

Another important factor in the alcohol issue is that a significant percentage of people who start drinking alcohol will become alcoholics. No one knows whether or not this is going to happen to them until it is too late. In the media we regularly read of famous people who have an alcohol problem, eg Mel Gibson. In the Dec 13, 2007 Sydney Morning Herald, p 3 there was a headline “*Illicit drug use, drinking starting at 12*”. The article goes on to describe the Odessey House Annual report which describes children as young as 10 years having to be treated for alcohol abuse, and how children now are starting alcohol around 12 years where as 30 years ago they started alcohol at 17 -18 yrs. We know that binge drinking by young people is now a major health problem in Australia, USA and UK.

Any attempt to put moderate alcohol consumption in the good light needs to be considered with the huge damage that alcohol is doing overall and that condoning alcohol generates peer pressure for more people to drink – a significant percentage of whom will damage themselves as a result.”

The message is clear – NO to all alcohol everywhere, every time, always.