
Wine doesn't make women fat, report claims

Women who drink wine are actually less likely to gain weight than those who are teetotal, according to a new report.

By Laura Roberts

Published: 10:36AM GMT 07 Mar 2010

Researchers found that regular moderate female drinkers were less likely to become obese after a 13 year study of more than 19,000 women.

The finding seems to contradict received dietary wisdom which has it that alcohol consumption leads to weight gain.

The body may use calories from alcohol in a different way from other foods which affects weight gain, doctors said.

It is thought that alcohol is broken down by the liver using a different metabolic pathway to create heat, rather than fat.

Lu Wang, from Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston questioned 19,220 American women with healthy body weight about their drinking habits.

About 38 per cent were non-alcohol drinkers.

Over 13 years this was the group that gained the most weight.

The more women drank the less weight they gained. Those who drank red wine gained the least weight with greater weight gain associated with beer and spirits.

The report, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, said there was no clear connection between alcohol consumption and weight gain.

However, Catherine Collins, a spokesman for the British Dietetic Association, said women should not look on wine as a weight loss aid.

She said: "If these women have a healthy diet and lifestyle and are having one or two units of alcohol a night then that has less calories than someone who instead has a chocolate bar to unwind. It's a question of "what's your poison?"

"Of course if women were drinking more than two units a day they would put on weight. What this survey shows is that moderation is key to a healthy lifestyle. People who drink wine may be more likely to snack on sugary and more calorific treats."

The benefits of drinking red wine have already been documented.

A study by Barts, the London School of Medicine and the Queen Mary University in London highlighted a mechanism in red wine that appeared to interfere with a body chemical responsible for clogging up the arteries.

Research by the Institute of Preventive Medicine in Copenhagen showed that a daily glass of red wine increased good cholesterol by up to 16 per cent, and reduced the clotting compound fibrinogen by up to 15 per cent.

Meanwhile, white wine has also been shown to have some beneficial effects, with a 2008 study by the University of Buffalo suggesting that while both red and white wine can bolster lung function, white wine seems to have a more positive effect.

© Copyright of Telegraph Media Group Limited 2010