

## A Healthy Heart and A Wet Mouth



Saint Patrick was born in Wales in about 389 AD, captured by pirates at the age of 16 and brought to Ireland in slavery. He escaped to the continent, became a monk, and went back to Ireland as a Christian Missionary. He used the shamrock to explain the Blessed Trinity, founded hundreds of churches, consecrated hundreds of bishops and baptized more than 100,000 people.

Normally observed on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, the anniversary of St. Paddy's death, this year the Catholic Church has changed the date to the 15<sup>th</sup> (the Ides of March!) so it doesn't conflict with Holy Week. Now a mostly secular holiday, when everyone the world over is welcome to consider themselves Irish, Saint Patrick's Day is a notorious bacchanalia, celebrated by the wearing of the green, dancing a jig, eating corned beef and cabbage and hoisting a pint.

Despite the widespread negative social connotations of drinking alcohol, new studies would suggest that, taken in moderation, beer and wine are, in fact, salubrious for the partaker, facilitating the Irish toast that says, "*Quaff Quote Croi follain agus gob fliuch,*" or "A Healthy Heart and A Wet Mouth!"

### We're Number 40!

During the course of a dinner party, Winston Churchill is famously quoted as having responded to his indignant dining companion's accusation that he was disgustingly inebriated, "I may be drunk, Miss, but in the morning I will be sober and you will still be ugly." Not the most chivalrous rejoinder, but a potent reminder of the reasons that drinking to excess is unattractive, not to mention dangerous to your health and the health of those around you.

In October of 2006, Time Magazine published their *United States of America* report in which it was revealed that every year, each American over the age of 15 consumes 7 bottles of liquor, 12 bottles of wine and 230 cans of beer, making us 40<sup>th</sup> in the world in alcohol consumption. Luxembourg comes in first in this contest, imbibing 88 bottles of wine, 284 cans of beer and more than 15 bottles of liquor per adult.

Since they started questioning Americans on the subject of alcohol in 1939, the World Health Organization reports that the percentage of those who say they drink now stands at 71%, with an average of 4 ½ drinks a week, up from 2.8 drinks a week in 1996.

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### Guinness /s Good For You!

Research into the connection between beer and wine and health started with the detection of the *French Paradox*, a phenomenon characterized by the fact that although they smoke more, exercise less and dine on a comparatively high fat diet, the French rate of heart disease is about 1/3 that of America; red wine was named as the reason for the dichotomy. When this information was aired on an episode of 60 Minutes in 1991, American wineries lobbied for the right to call their products health food and general consumption of red wine increased by 44%. Perhaps an extreme reaction, but the French Paradox did lead to a whirlwind of research that concluded that **one or two glasses of red wine or dark beer each day is advantageous**. Each of these beverages is loaded with flavonoids which have beneficial effects such as a reducing the tension of the blood vessel walls, raising good HDL cholesterol, lowering bad LDL cholesterol, inhibiting the production and development of tumors, inhibiting the formation of blood clots, and controlling a high white blood cell count. Free radicals and anti-inflammatories protect against heart attack, and new evidence seems to find dark beer and wine efficacious in fighting heart failure, stroke, osteoporosis, or "Truth in wine." prostate cancer, tooth decay, upper respiratory tract disease and even dementia.

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Furthermore, wine was the drink of choice for Americans, or 8.5% of the population, meet the diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse or alcoholism, as defined in the *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*:

“Alcoholism is a chronic disease associated with the excessive and habitual use of alcohol; the disease, if left unattended, worsens and can kill the sufferer. Alcoholism is marked by physical dependency and can cause disorders in many organs of the body, including the liver (see cirrhosis), stomach, intestines, and brain. It is also associated with abnormal heart rhythms, with certain cancers, and, because of loss of appetite, with poor nutrition. The cause of alcoholism is very complicated and most often involves a mixture of physical, psychological, and possibly genetic factors.”

In their book, *Why Do Men Have Nipples? Hundreds of Questions You'd Only Ask A Doctor After Your Third Martini*, Mark Leyner and Dr. Billy Goldberg lay out the blueprint of dipsomania, defining drunkenness as a blood alcohol level of 100 milligrams of booze per 10 liters of blood (.10%, characterized by a loss of coordination and balance). With a blood



alcohol concentration of .02%, one feels light headed. At .08% a loss of critical judgment begins. By .15% the reveler experiences disorientation; at .20% vomiting ensues, followed at .30% by a drunken stupor; 40% coma, and finally, death at .45%+.

Metabolism plays a large role in recovery from a drunken state, but on average, it takes six to eight hours to return to normal. A hangover is largely the result of dehydration and interrupted sleep, and remedies abound. The idea of the *Hair of the dog that bit you* comes from the Greek dramatist Aristophanes who, like his contemporaries, believed that 'like cured like,' and so prescribed putting the hair of the rabid dog that had bitten you into the wound as an antidote.

First cousin of the requisite Bloody Mary, which was invented in the 1920s, Bertram Wilberforce "Bertie" Wooster, the narrator of more than 40 of English author P.G. Wodehouse's comedic novels, relied on the Prairie Oyster, which he found quite "bracing:"

*1 Whole Egg, 1 Ounce Vodka, 2 Dashes Vinegar, 1 Teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce, 1 Teaspoon Ketchup, 2 Dashes Tabasco Sauce and a pinch of Salt and Pepper.*

Other nostrums include rabbit droppings tea, popular in the Wild Wild West, eels mixed with bitter almonds, which was all the rage in mediaeval times, fried sheep eyeballs, favored by Mongolians, boiled cow entrails, and the Haitian practice of sticking thirteen black-headed pins into the cork of the offending bottle. ♥

## Websites We Love

### [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

Alcoholics Anonymous® is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

### [www.beerandhealth.com](http://www.beerandhealth.com)

As its name implies, Dr. Marleen Finoulst hosts this forum for international research on beer (and other alcoholic beverages) and health.

### [www.winepros.org](http://www.winepros.org)

The mission statement of the Professional Friends of Wine reads, "PFW is dedicated to increasing wine appreciation by providing wine education, wine information, and wine training, and offering wine opinions. Our mission is to spread wine knowledge and enthusiasm and to dispel any and all snobbery and myth regarding wine."

### [www.guinness.com](http://www.guinness.com)

All things Guinness!

*Moderate alcohol consumption is healthy as long as you ride your bike to the liquor store.*

## Moonshine Minutiae

- ♥ By an act of Congress, Bourbon is the official spirit of the United States.
- ♥ The shallow champagne flute was designed from wax molds of the breasts of French Queen Marie Antoinette.
- ♥ In ancient Babylon, where the calendar was lunar-based, a bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead (fermented honey beverage) he could drink for a month after the wedding. This was called the, "honey month," or what we now call the "honeymoon."
- ♥ "Find out the name of the brand so I can give it to my other generals," was President Lincoln's reply when he found out that General Grant was drinking whiskey while leading his troops.
- ♥ In the state of Missouri, anyone under the age of 21 who takes out household trash containing even a single empty alcohol beverage container can be charged with illegal possession of alcohol.
- ♥ When we raise a glass and say, "Toast," we pay homage to the ancient Roman tradition of dropping a piece of toasted bread in to wine. They did this because the bread soaked up the impurities and improved the taste of the wine.
- ♥ Wine sipped in wine tastings in Utah must be spit out and may not be swallowed.
- ♥ Adding a miniature onion to a martini turns it into a Gibson.
- ♥ In 2002 it cost more than \$35,000 for a restaurant liquor license in Philadelphia, a bargain compared to obtaining one in Evesham Township, NJ for more than \$475,000 or in Mount Laurel, NJ at over \$675,000.
- ♥ Thermometers were filled with brandy instead of mercury in the 1600s.
- ♥ Methyphobia is defined as the fear of alcohol.

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**What do you want to talk about?** The topic index for a newsletter focusing on healthcare is vast, but we'd like to know what subjects you'd like to discuss. Drop us a line at [info@lifespancm.com](mailto:info@lifespancm.com) and fill us in on the pressing issues in your life. Thank you

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In Ireland, where Guinness is King, an extensive body of lore exists about the miracle curative of the beer. There is no way to confirm that Guinness was ever served to blood donors, post-operative patients, nursing mothers or race horses, but in the 1930s, the SH Benson Advertising Agency came out with the 'Good for You' campaign, based upon market research that revealed that people felt good after drinking a pint. In a market-

ing move that would never be allowed today, Guinness advised, "Seven glasses, 7 days of the week and 7 beneficial reasons to drink it (for strength, nerves, digestion, exhaustion, sleeplessness, its tonic effects and the blood)." Like Coors Light, Guinness is 4.2% alcohol (compared with Budweiser's 5%) with 210 calories and 17 Carbs, while red wine is 10% - 16% alcohol but only 102 calories for a five ounce glass and only 2.41 Carbs. In his book The Wine and Food Lover's Diet, Dr. Phillip Tirman, a specialist in sports medicine, says, "...statistics show that moderate wine consumption is associated with lower risk of stroke, heart disease, and diabetes, among other ailments. One explanation is that wine appears to increase the ratio of "good" HDL cholesterol to artery-clogging "bad" LDL cholesterol. The antioxidants found in red wine, in particular, reduce the oxidative stress on cells, which in turn appears to reduce the risk of certain cancers."

This Saint Paddy's Day, when Irish eyes turn to you and smile and say, "Sláinte," or "To Your Health," there may, in fact, be no small "In Vino Veritas" ♥

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