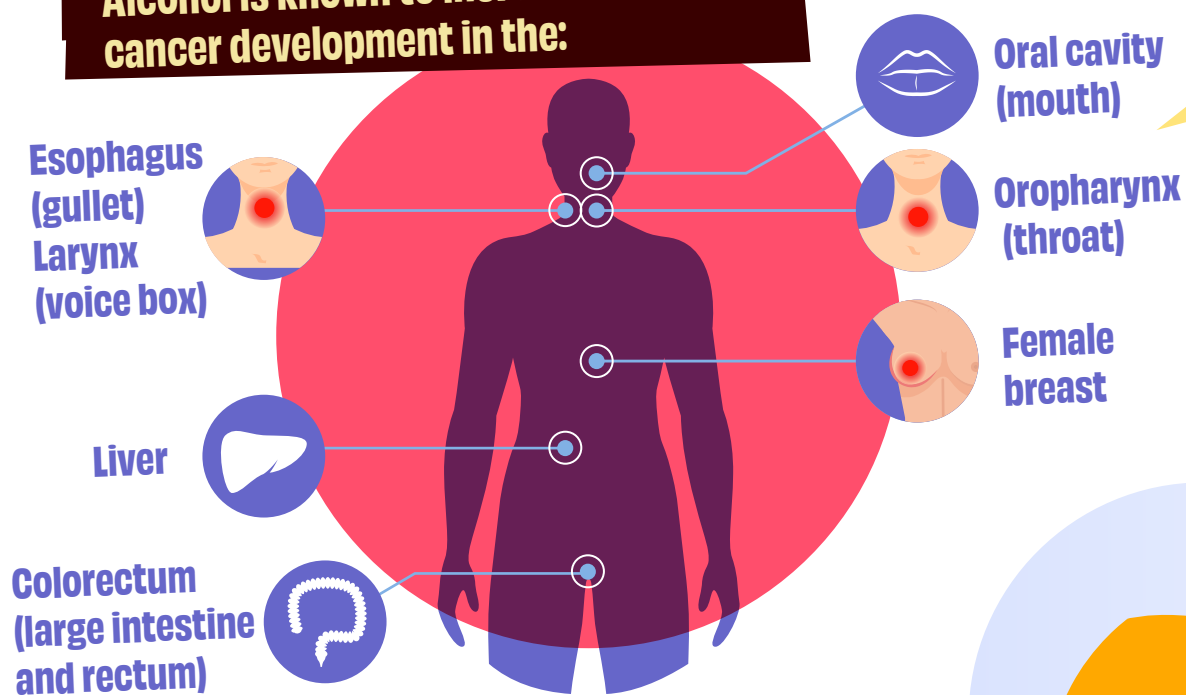


ALCOHOL AND CANCER

5 FACTS

Alcohol is known to increase the risk of cancer development in the:



1. Alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer

Worldwide, in 2020 there were 740,000 cases of cancer due to alcohol, and 470,000 deaths from cancer due to alcohol. One of the ways that alcohol (in any alcoholic beverage) can cause cancer is through DNA damage.

2. The most common types of cancer due to alcohol are different for men and women

3. The risk of cancer increases with the amount consumed

The ingredient responsible for cancer risks in alcoholic beverages is the alcohol, or ethanol, itself. Therefore, all types of alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine, and spirits, can cause cancer. The risk starts at low levels and increases substantially the more alcohol is consumed. Compared to men, women experience a greater increase of the risk of developing cancer per drink of alcohol consumed.

5. Cancers due to alcohol are preventable

Reducing alcohol consumption reduces the risk of developing cancer.

The following regulations can support the reduction of alcohol consumption and ultimately of cancers caused by alcohol consumption:

- Making alcohol less **affordable**
- Banning or restricting alcohol **marketing** across all types of media
- Reducing alcohol **availability**

The Pan American Health Organization strongly supports regulations to place health warnings on alcoholic beverages so that the public can know about the risks of cancer from alcohol consumption. Then customers can make informed choices, such as reducing or stopping drinking alcohol. If you already drink alcoholic beverages, reduce your drinking to reduce your cancer risk.

Men

- 6% of male cancer **cases** and 7% of male cancer **deaths** are due to alcohol
- Worldwide, the most common type of alcohol related cancer in men is **cancer of the esophagus**

Women

- 2% of female cancer **cases** and 2% of female cancer **deaths** are due to alcohol
- Worldwide, the most common type of alcohol related cancer in women is **breast cancer**

4. Using alcohol and tobacco multiplies cancer risks

People who use both alcohol and tobacco **have a five-times increased risk of developing cancers** of the oral cavity, oropharynx, larynx, and esophagus, compared with people who use either alcohol or tobacco alone.

NOT DRINKING ALCOHOL IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT CANCERS THAT ARE RELATED TO ALCOHOL.

Sources

WHO. Fact sheet - 5 facts about alcohol and cancer. WHO; 2021 [cited 8 Sep 2021]. Available from: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/alcohol-use/publications/2021/fact-sheet-5-facts-about-alcohol-and-cancer>

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