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Alcohol and health: reducing your risk

(Your city) – For healthy individuals who choose to drink alcohol, “raising a glass” often goes hand in hand with celebrations, socializing, or simply as a complement to a good meal shared with friends. But as a recent publication by the World Health Organization (WHO) points out, “alcohol is no ordinary commodity”. According to the Global Burden of Disease study sponsored by WHO, alcohol was listed as the third most detrimental risk factor for chronic disease in developed countries, with only tobacco and high blood pressure causing more harm (WHO, 2003).

What about the studies proclaiming the health benefits of alcohol? While a moderate intake of alcohol (one to two standard drinks a day) may help protect against heart disease and stroke, drinking more than two drinks a day can actually increase the risk of stroke and other chronic diseases including some cancers. In fact, *“Individuals who consume more than one drink per day have a 1.4 times greater risk for breast cancer or colorectal cancer than non-drinkers”* (Cancer Care Ontario, 2001).

To support a provincial campaign promoting low-risk drinking, the (FOCUS Community) is hoping to raise awareness about the link between alcohol and chronic disease, and provide information to individuals about how to reduce their risk. “It’s really about knowledge and clearing up misconceptions that people may have about alcohol and health. For healthy individuals who choose to drink, reducing their intake to daily and weekly limits will help reduce the risk for chronic disease as well as other alcohol-related problems”, says _____, Coordinator of the FOCUS Community.

What is the best advice for individuals who choose to drink alcohol? Limit your intake to *no more than* 2 standard drinks on any given day, with a weekly limit of 9 drinks for women and 14 drinks for men. On occasions when you do drink, wait at least one hour between drinks, have something to eat, and drink other non-alcoholic beverages such as water, fruit juices, or soft drinks.

For more information on low-risk drinking call the *FOCUS Community* at .

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