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## Study Pinpoints Impact of Heavy Drinking on the Heart

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Heavy drinking causes high blood pressure, stiff arteries and rigid heart muscles in men and enlarged hearts in women, boosting their risk of having heart attacks and strokes. Heavy drinking is defined in the study presented at the American Society of Hypertension in New Orleans as over 21 drinks a week for men and over 14 per week for women.

Once a heart becomes enlarged it is difficult to reverse. Prior studies have suggested that people with enlarged hearts are five to six times more likely to have heart attacks. Moderate drinking has been shown in many studies to have heart benefits. But heavy drinking counteracts these benefits and can cause serious harm.

Published on : Thu, 15 May 2008