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***Giving a toast
to your health
is now more
literal than
ever!***

Wine Helps Prevent Strokes!

Drinking a glass of wine from once a day to once a week can reduce the risk of having a stroke.

The study followed 22,071 male physicians, 40 to 84 years old, who drank from no alcohol to three drinks a day. This was the largest alcohol - stroke study done to date, and found that the moderate drinkers lowered their risk of *ischemic* stroke by around 20 percent. An Ischemic stroke is the most common type of stroke. The alcohol had no effect on the more rare form of stroke, hemorrhagic, where there is sudden bleeding in the brain.

The researchers assume that the same benefits would be conferred on women as well, since the alcohol is in essence "clearing out the arteries", something that would happen for both sexes. The alcohol itself breaks up blood clots, while the wine also increases the amount of HDL ("good" cholesterol) in the bloodstream.

This is not the first study to show how alcohol helps prevent strokes. The Northern Manhattan Stroke Study found the same protection occurred against ischemic stroke among whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

For both men and women, the researchers found, the risk of death from any cause over the five-year follow-up period was lower for those with the most Mediterranean-like diets. Deaths from cancer or cardiovascular disease were also significantly lower in this group.

The benefit was especially strong in smokers who were not overweight, who nearly halved their risk of death if they closely followed the Mediterranean diet pattern.

Smokers may have had the most to gain from the antioxidant and blood fat-lowering effects of Mediterranean-style eating, Mitrou and colleagues suggest.

(Extract from The New England Journal of Medicine Vol. 341, No. 21)