



## The Alcohol Health Scare Comes for Wine

### Editorial Comment

Wine Opinions and Colangelo & Partners collaborated on a research project to explore U.S. wine drinker attitudes and behaviors regarding a number of critical issues facing the U.S. wine industry, including the potential amendment of U.S. Dietary Guidelines to reduce the recommendation for adult consumption of beverage alcohol from 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women to the level of 2 drinks per week for all adults.

The dietary guidelines are revised every five years and the next revision will become effective in 2025. The recommendation of the reduced level of consumption is being advocated by Dr. George Koob, the Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. He has stated "There's really no safe amount of alcohol" and is said to favor the '2 drinks per week' recommendation, which has already been adopted in Canada.

There were 2,013 survey respondents. All were U.S. adults who drink wine (on average) 2-3 times a month or more often. As a group, they are representative of the 77% of all U.S. wine drinkers who account for 98% of total U.S. wine consumption.

Survey respondents were first asked to indicate the effect that their personal level of wine consumption has on their physical health and their sense of well-being. In total, they rated the effect of wine on their physical health as slightly positive (4.6 on a 7-point scale). They rated wine's effect on their sense of well-being somewhat more positively (5.0 on the 7-point scale).

A subsequent question asked survey takers to state their likely response to a change in the U.S. Dietary Guidelines from the current "one alcohol drink a day for women, two for men" to a new recommendation of no more than "two alcohol drinks per week." The results can be seen in the chart below. They point to a significant challenge for the wine industry in the event of the adoption of the "two drinks per week" guideline.

Among all survey respondents, 15% indicated they would adopt the new guideline, and 21% stated they would reduce their wine consumption, but not down to the new recommended level. Among wine drinkers under the age of 40, the results were dramatic: 30% indicated they would adopt the new guideline and 36% stated they would reduce their current level of wine consumption.

While modest percentages of those who are frequent wine drinkers indicated they would either cut back on their wine drinking frequency or adopt the new guideline, twice as many occasional drinkers showed intent to do so. The most significant skew among respondents indicating the likelihood of adopting the new guideline or reducing their wine consumption was among the ages 21-39 segment.

In all, the survey results suggest that the negative impact to wine consumption in the U.S. resulting from adoption of the '2 drinks per week' dietary guideline would be substantial.

**John Gillespie**  
Wine Opinions Founder and CEO

### Likely Response to Proposed Alcohol Consumption Guideline

Response	Total	21-39	40-59	60-Plus	Males	Females	Occasional	Frequent
Adopt new guideline	15%	30%	7%	5%	15%	15%	21%	12%
Cut down but not to new level	21%	36%	13%	11%	22%	19%	30%	16%
Give consideration but unsure	35%	35%	34%	37%	33%	37%	41%	32%
No change in consumption level	38%	21%	46%	48%	39%	36%	24%	44%

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