

Red wine

When it comes to a healthier alcohol, red wine is top of the list.

Red wine contains antioxidants, which can protect your cells from damage, and polyphenols, which can promote heart health. White wine and rose contain those too, just in smaller quantities.

Research shows that red wine is associated with improving:

- Cardiovascular health
- Bone density
- Brain health

No matter what type of wine you're reaching for, Kober recommends looking for natural wines. "These wines have far fewer additives and your liver won't have to work as hard, adding to the health benefits that you may get from your wine," she says.

General advice: Ask your local wine store about the healthiest natural wines to purchase.

Champagne

The grapes used to make champagne are high in phenolic compounds, a type of antioxidant that can boost brain health and may help reduce risk for dementia.

In fact, a 2013 animal study found that champagne improved memory in aged rodents. While the findings have not yet been confirmed for human brains, researchers believed the results were promising and matched similar results for other antioxidant-rich foods like blueberries.

Tequila

Research on mice shows that consuming the agave tequila plant can increase calcium absorption and improve bone health. However, for humans, it's doubtful that drinking tequila can actually help treat calcium deficiency or bone conditions like osteoporosis.

Still, clear liquors like tequila are generally a low-calorie drink choice, says Kober, and you could do a lot worse if you're drinking.

"Clear liquors like vodka, tequila, and gin are lowest in sugar and calories and are easiest for our bodies to metabolize," Kober says.

Whiskey

We've all heard about the antioxidant benefits of red wine — and research has found that whiskey can have a similar effect.

In fact, that study concluded that moderate alcohol usage plus increased antioxidant intake may help decrease risk for heart disease.

However, whether alcohol can really be heart-healthy is still debated, and it's likely better to indulge in other antioxidant-rich treats like dark chocolate.

Hard kombucha

Kombucha is a beverage made from fermented tea. Normally, it has an extremely low alcohol content — so much that it's not classified as an alcoholic beverage.

However, some kombucha makers are now producing hard kombucha, which has an alcohol content similar to beer or hard seltzer. Regular kombucha has some health benefits, including reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and aiding in digestion.

It's not yet clear whether those translate into hard kombucha. However, some brands of hard kombuchas have no sugar, which is great from a health perspective, says Kober. "No matter what alcohol you're drinking, you want to steer clear of sugar," since sugar is associated with a host of ill health effects from weight gain to heart disease, she says.

Drinks to avoid

Knowing the health benefits of some alcoholics is great, but it's equally important to know which drinks to skip. If you're trying to stay healthy, take these drinks out or rotation, Kober says.

- **Beer:** Beer is high in empty calories and congeners, chemical components that contribute to hangovers. "Beer is probably last on my list of alcohols that could potentially have health benefits," Kober says.
- **Sweet drinks:** Drinks with juice are packed with sugar, which means extra calories and a greater hangover, says Kober. "Stick with sparkling water, lemon, lime, cucumber slices, or orange slices to flavor," she says.